



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

The Fourth Sunday of Advent 2020 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 89:1-5*

I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

² For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever;

in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”

³ You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

⁴ ‘I will establish your offspring forever,

and build your throne for all generations.’ ”

⁵ Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,

your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

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

Scripture Lesson – Luke 1:26 – 38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord

God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

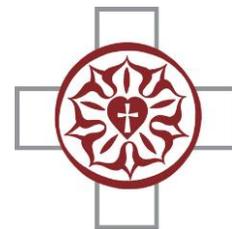
³⁴And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Sermon – † *Staying Humble* † *(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

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

Entrusting into God's Care

- Those suffering from the pandemic
- Those recovering from the August derecho
- The homeless, the hungry, & those in need of productive work
- Dee Rose - hospice care at Meth-Wick nursing facility
- Workers in the Church, here at Bethany and throughout the world

Healing

- Dave Johnson - healing
- Robert (father of Chris Knudson) - hospitalization
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Andrew (grandson of Schumachers) - recovering after open heart surgery
- Jane (daughter of Bonnie Bubke) - recovering after surgery
- Del Block - recovering after COVID-19
- Noelle (relative of Larsons) - cancer
- Wayne (relative of Knutsons) - recovering after COVID-19
- Robert & Bud (fathers of Chris & Leisa Knudson) - health issues
- Hazel (granddaughter of Kim Neuhaus) - health issues
- Linda Patten - recovering after hip replacement
- 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

- Larry & Sharon Easler– Summit Pointe, Marion

Mourning

- Leisa Knudson - mourning the death of father, Bud, on 12/17
- Loved ones of Dee Block mourning her death 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
- Larsons - mourning the death of friend, Steve, on 12/1
- Loved ones of Bernie Rehnstrom mourning his death on 11/25

Serving Our Country

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

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Prayer for Humility

O God, You resist the proud and give grace to the humble. Grant us true humility after the likeness of Your only Son that we may never be arrogant and prideful and thus provoke Your wrath but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Your grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Luther's Morning Prayer

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.



✠ *Staying Humble* ✠

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 is largely made up of Jesus instructing His disciples on how to be disciples and He begins this instruction with teachings that are commonly referred to as the Beatitudes. There, in Matthew 5:5 Jesus says, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" Hearing this, some people have wondered how long will the meek be able to stay meek after they have received their inheritance? The thinking is that the more successful a person is, the harder it is for them to be humble.

This is easily seen in the world of professional sports. When an athlete first reaches the top level of their profession, they often have an attitude of humility and gratitude. But as they become more and more successful, winning championships or gold medals, it is rare not to see their humility fade away. We also can come across this in the world of charity. The author and philosopher Sam Harris has said one of the objections he often hears people have against helping others, is that they themselves are self-made people. They believe that since no one had helped them up the ladder of success, they have no obligation to help others in need. Rather, they say those who need help should do what they did and pull themselves up by the proverbial bootstraps. But interestingly, this type of thinking is not nearly as common among the poor as it is the wealthy

or successful. It seems that it's easy to look down on others when you think that you are at the top.

When we first come across Mary in our Gospel Lesson from Luke, she is nowhere near the top of just about anything. Therefore, it might not be all that surprising to find her with a humble attitude. We are told in Luke 1:26 Mary's home was in the town of Nazareth. Remembering that Nathaniel once asked, "Nazareth, can anything good come out of Nazareth?", you might be able to guess that Nazareth was not a very popular place back in those days. It was "nonplace"; off the beaten path, never mentioned in the Old Testament or any of the Jewish teachings, not even the Jewish historian, Josephus. And with having just one spring providing the entire town with water, you might say it was the equivalent of the one-stoplight town of today.

This was the town where young Mary found herself. Most likely poor and with little education, she was engaged and was probably just looking forward to a life where she would raise many children, never travel more than a few miles away from home, and then die a nobody in a nothing town in the middle of nowhere. If she didn't have every reason to be humble, she certainly didn't have any reason to be overly proud.

But then Gabriel comes to visit her. Of course seeing one of the Lord's angels causes Mary some concern. But Gabriel quickly give her an amazing message that both relieves any fear she might have had and also, elevates her to be among the most important people the world has ever known. The angel says, "*Greetings, O favored one. The Lord is with you.*" Gabriel continues, "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*" When Mary, a virgin, asks how it will be that she'll give birth to a son, Gabriel responds, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God*".

Martin Luther pointed out, "[Gabriel] might have gone to Jerusalem and picked out Caiaphas's daughter, who was fair, rich, clad in [golden embroidery] and attended by a retinue of maids in waiting. But God preferred a lowly maid from a mean town." But now, with this incredible news that she would conceive the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary would never be known as a lowly maid ever again. She rightly says later in Luke, "*For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name*" (1:48-49).

It has been said (Spurgeon) that being humble means being proud of what God has done. And this is exactly the attitude that Mary had. Having God's plan of salvation come to fruition through her, it would have been so easy for Mary to no longer be a humble servant of God. As the mother of our Savior, she could have easily demanded that the entire world grant her every desire. She could have told Gabriel to take her to a palace and adorn with the finest of clothes fitting for her position. But instead, as Gabriel departs she says, "*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*" Mary doesn't boast in her new status. Instead, she humbly recognizes herself as the Lord's servant. And she does this, because she knows that it is God who has done this great thing for her. She is no longer a lowly maid, because God is with her in a very real way through Jesus Christ, who had humbled Himself for our sake.

Not many of us will ever find ourselves in such a lowly position as Mary once was in. But all of us are just as blessed because of the great things that God has done. Of course, we will never be the mother of our Lord, yet if she was blessed because God was with her, because the power of

God overshadowed her – then we are certainly just as blessed as Mary. For whether we are in Cedar Rapids, or Solon, or Marion; or if we live at Summit Pointe or Methwick or Cottage Grove or in a house or in an apartment or even if we don't have a home; when we are at school or at work – no matter how rich or poor, popular or despised – we know, that Jesus is Immanuel, that is “God With Us”. He had left heaven and came humbly into our sinful world to save us. And Jesus did not just come to us once on that first Christmas. Jesus came to each one of us when we were baptized and He didn't stop there. He continues to come to us through His Word, just as He promised in it. And of course, His presence is there with us at the altar when we offers us His body and blood. We cannot have the relationship that Mary had with Jesus, but Jesus our Savior is with us and therefore God has promised to do great things in all of our lives.

With Christ in our lives we know that whatever the situation we find ourselves in, God is working out all things for our good. We know that all of our sins are forgiven. The times our pride has wanted to exalt ourselves instead of God, are taken away. The times when we have thought ourselves better than others, are taken away. The times we have failed to help those in need, are taken away because God's power has overshadowed us with Christ's presence. As we continue to live with this sinful world around us, these promises of God may seem as unreal as Gabriel's message did to Mary. But if we continue to put away our pride and believe in the promises of God through Christ, we'll find ourselves saying with Mary, “*Let it be to me according to Your Word.*” We'll find ourselves as true and humble servants of our Lord. We'll find ourselves as disciples of Christ, who will inherit the earth and keep it forever in His name. Amen.

