



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

April 18th, 2021 A.D. – The Third 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 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 4*

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

² O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?

How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;

the LORD hears when I call to him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin;

ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.

⁵ Offer right sacrifices,

and put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?”

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”

⁷ You have put more joy in my heart

than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

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 24:36-49*

³⁶As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as

you see that I have.”⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Sermon – † *Open Minded Christians* † (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

Thanksgiving

- Phil Hoppe - recovering after surgery

Entrusting into God's Care

- Darrel (father of Janet Hoech) - hospice care
- Barbara (mother of Jim Heitland) - hospice care
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Workers in the Church, here at Bethany and throughout the world

Healing

- Mariam (granddaughter of *Siecks) - upcoming surgery 4/20
- Kyle Kraft - recovering after surgery
- Rose (friend of Kay Karsten) - chemo and radiation treatment
- Kim Neuhaus - health issues
- Nancy Owens - health issues
- Elaine Cook - recovering after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery
- Faye Sieck - health issues
- Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
- Kris Dunn - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Candi Engel— Garnet Place

Serving Our Country

- Tailor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) - serving in U.S. Armed Forces
- Harrison (son of Rob & Faye Sieck)- serving in U.S. Armed Forces

Collect of the Day

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through 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.



✠ *Open Minded Christians* ✠

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

Today, as we should do every Sunday, we continue to celebrate and rejoice in our Lord's glorious resurrection from the dead. The Good News of Easter is the Gospel. The Gospel that tells us Jesus has defeated death and is our Lord and Savior. The Gospel that tells us Jesus opened the grave and therefore has opened the gates of heaven to all who believe in Him. This is truly the best news that our fallen and sinful world has ever heard.

Yet as important and joyous as the news of the open grave is, today we hear of another opening that is almost as important. This was when Jesus "*opened*" the minds of His disciples "to understand the Scriptures". This opening too, is Good News, for without this opening of minds, the open tomb would be of no benefit to the disciples nor to anyone bound in the chains of sin and death. This is because our sinful nature by itself cannot understand God's Word, let alone repent and come to a saving faith in Christ. In fact, you might say that we need to be "open-minded Christians".

Now this kind of open-mindedness is very different from what the world today thinks when it talks of having an “open mind”. To the world, to have an open mind means to be open to all kinds of thinking, all sorts opinions and world views. At the heart of this is the idea that there is no such thing as real truth, or even right or wrong. Rather, the world will tell us that we need to be open and accepting to all ideas that people have and choicest that people make. To recognize each of them as potentially valid and true, if not for yourself, then at least for someone else.

To be open-minded in this post-modern world is to let all sorts of things fill your mind - all kinds of worldly wisdom, and so called “enlightened” thinking. For instance, without fail every Christmas and Easter we see the articles and television shows telling us that historians have finally discovered who Jesus really was or what He was really like. Usually, this is rather unflattering or contradictory to what the Bible tells us of our Lord. Or when discussing social problems such as protecting the unborn or lifting our fellow human beings out of poverty and hunger, how often do we hear solutions that fly in the face of God’s will for all people? Killing the unborn, helping people to sin safely, or freeing oneself from our responsibility to our neighbor or even our families, might be considered “open minded” today. But the result of all this open-mindedness is that our minds today resemble a landfill or a cesspool, because all those nuggets of worldly wisdom that are removed from God’s will and His ways, only create confusion and doubt.

That seems to be the kind of confusion that gripped the disciples after Jesus' crucifixion and death. For when He appeared to them we read that, “*they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. . . . [And] doubts [arose] in [their] hearts*” (37-38). When it says “doubts [arose] in [their] hearts,” it means that their hearts were stirred up. Think of muddy water that gets stirred up, or a pot of soup that gets stirred up. All the stuff that had filled their minds, that had settled to the bottom, got stirred up that horrible weekend and clouded their thinking, so that things weren't so clear anymore. All kinds of thoughts and ideas and worldly wisdom had been stirred up in their heads, and they didn't know what to think or to believe. Questions must have swirled through the disciples minds like – Could someone live after He had died? Was Jesus who He said He was? Why didn't God save Him from the cross? Could this be a real body, or was it just a ghost? They were confused, as many are in the world today.

And so Jesus comes to them and opens their minds - not to let more junk in! - but to clean out the junk and fill their minds with His Word. To clean out the cesspool of filth and falsehood and fear and all kinds of wrong thinking and ideas, and then fill their minds with His truth and wisdom. For as only He could open the grave for us, only He can open our minds that were at one time tombs of confusion and doubt and fill them with the light of His Word and truth. Fill them with repentance, faith, and forgiveness, that we may know Him as our Savior and believe and be saved.

And this is what the risen Christ is still doing today, here in this congregation, and everywhere believers gather as His Church. John in his first epistle calls us children of God, and that is not only a pleasing picture for us, but also an accurate one. For we are born through the water and the Word of Holy Baptism; born again to a new life as we are joined to the death and resurrection of Christ. Through water and the Spirit, the tombs of our minds are opened and filled with the truth of the risen Christ. And this not just once, but over and over again as in repentance and faith we return to our Baptism, to clean out the junk this world pours in, to be absolved of our wrong and sinful thoughts and words and deeds, and to be filled with the truth, love, and clarity of Christ's life and love.

And then something else happens. For after God first acts and we receive His free gifts, then it is our turn to act. For just as children learn how to speak by being spoken to, and learn how

to act by imitating their parents, so, too, do we as children of God. And so after opening and cleaning out the minds of His disciples and filling them with His truth, Jesus calls them eyewitnesses who will be sent to speak what they have seen and what they believe. They will be sent with His Spirit to speak as they have been spoken to. Sent to love as they have been loved and to forgive as they have been forgiven. And thus to open more and more minds that had been filled with confusion and doubt, sin and death, that the light of Christ's cleansing forgiveness might shine on and in and through all people. Yet this is not their work at all, but the work of the Spirit given to them who will work through His word.

Now it must be said that not all, or even most, worldly wisdom is bad. God has blessed many people in our world all across time with great minds and intelligence, and through their work and the carrying out of their vocations, we have received many great things from God—great advances in medicine, technology, and communication, and such. And we do and should thank God for them all. But as always - with the good has come the bad. That is the false wisdom, the false gods, and false truths that the prince of this world uses to cloud hearts and minds, to “deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice” as Luther explains in the Lord's Prayer.

And so there is another wisdom with which our minds must be filled. A higher wisdom that rules all worldly wisdom. The wisdom from God so that we know what is true and what is false; what is good and what is not; what is godly and what must be left aside. This wisdom is of Christ and His Word. And so we receive Him when He comes to us. To fill you with His gifts. To forgive your doubt and give you peace. To fill you with His perfect love that having here received, you now go and give. And speaking His Word, hearts and minds will continue to be opened, as well as the gates of Heaven to all believers.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

