



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

April 25th, 2021 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 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 23 (KJV)

P The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

C **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:**

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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 – *I John 3:16-24*

¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

¹⁹By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²²and whatever we

ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

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

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

Thanksgiving

Call Day at Concordia Seminary for Sean (son of Doris Baker) and other students on 4/28

Marriage of Bev Linman and Blaine Munson on 4/22

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

Darlene Eckert— recovering after surgery

Ruthie (daughter of Pat Krekeler)- COVID-19

Ron (uncle of Dawn Thomas) - diagnosed with pancreatic cancer
Mariam (granddaughter of *Siecks) - recovering after surgery
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

Shut-Ins

Nadine Wax - at home

Serving Our Country

Taylor & 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

Let us pray... Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, 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.



✠ *Easter Love* ✠

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

It has been said that everyone knows love. Even the worst people in history loved something. But here's the catch: on our own, most of the time the object of our love is simply ourselves. You see, when we love something, it's generally because it brings us some sort of pleasure or helps us avoid some sort of pain. But is that type of love, really love at all?

The apostle John writes in two verses just before our text, *“For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous”* (3:11-12). Cain loved, but the object of his love was himself. His brother received recognition from God, and out of jealousy, Cain killed his brother, Abel. His type of love manifested itself as actual hate and evil toward his brother. Thus we see that even though we have heard from the beginning of time to love one another...we don't.

Another example of a poor excuse for what is called love is in Jesus' description of the religious leaders of His day. Their type of love was not directed to those God had given them to care for, but rather their love was directed toward themselves. Jesus taught, *“He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep”* (Jn 10:12-13). Remember, *“This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another”* (1 Jn 3:11). But we don't.

The Law proves over and over again that we are more like Cain and the hired hands than we would like to admit. And when we see what happened to Cain and the religious leaders of Jesus' time, it becomes clear that we need something different.

The message of Easter shows us exactly that - a different kind of love. This is a love that has “the other” as the object of its affection. It is a love that lays down one's life for the sake of the other. It is a love that is confident and unafraid because it lacks nothing. It is not motivated by the fear of losing anything, but rather it recognizes that it has received everything, and so it freely gives of itself.

Contrasting the selfish love of oneself with the love that we learn from God, John writes, *“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us”* (v 16). People tell us that we have to earn their respect. We understand that we have to earn a paycheck. When people tell us that they love us, it's often followed by “because” and that word is usually accompanied by something we did. For example, “I love you because you are always there for me.” Or, “I love you because you are such a good friend.” This is not wrong, and when we hear words like that we feel good that we brought something good into someone else's life.

But John is not talking about a love that we have earned. Did we deserve to have God lay down his life for us? Of course not! The love that God has made known is far different from any other love. In Romans 5 St. Paul describes it by writing, *“God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak... Christ died for the ungodly.... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.... While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son”* (Rom 5:5-6, 8, 10). That is love.

And Jesus gives us this love willingly. He says, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I am the good shepherd.... I lay down my life for the sheep.... No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay, it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. and I have authority to take it up again”* (Jn 10:11, 14, 15. 18). Jesus laid down His life and took it up again for us. This is the message of Easter and *“By this we know love”*.

We receive and know this love every time we gather around our Good Shepherd in the Word and Sacraments. Also, in Confession and Absolution, He shows us that His love has covers all of the sins that would bring us guilt and shame. And by His same love, that guilt and shame is removed. All of this is made possible because He laid down His life for the sheep and took it up again. Lent and Easter get at the heart of how we know love.

And John lets us know that this love cannot be contained to those who just receive it. If a person receives Jesus’ love, he must love others. David put it this way: *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows”* (Ps 23:5). Receiving God’s love through Christ and all good things from God, these blessings should overflow out of our lives and directly into the lives of those around us.

This does not mean that we will ever be sinless on this side of the grave or Christ’s return. And no one should look to his or her own actions to assure themselves that they are going to heaven. However, if we notice that we are not letting God’s love have its way with us, meaning that our love for others has failed or is not where God wants it to be, then we must return to God’s love in Christ through the Word and Sacraments. For is is there that we know love and find the source of our love for others. It is because Jesus laid down His life for us that we have the ability to lay down our lives for others.

In verse 23 of our text, John wrote, *“And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.”* As Lutherans, we have always understood that all obedience to God’s commandments begins with the Father’s love for us in Jesus. And therefore, believing in Jesus as our Savior and loving one another simply cannot be separated - they are the two parts of the same command. And so, as a Christian, as a disciple of Jesus, when you love those around you, remember God’s love for you. And as we remember God’s immeasurable love for us through Jesus, let us also remember to let that love overflow from your life and into the lives of many, many others. This is more that just following God’s commandment, it is also living lives filled with God’s true love. Amen.

