



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

May 2, 2020 A.D.

Confirmation 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 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.

Introit From John 16 and Psalm 145

P A little while, and you will see me no longer;
C **and again a little while, and you will see me.**
I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.
The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your saints shall bless you!
My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and 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 Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson – John 15:1-8

¹[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the

fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Sermon – † *Living as Branches* † (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

- Confirmation students affirming their faith
- Charlotte (daughter of Brad and Erin Crawford) - born 4/29

Entrusting into God's 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

- Al Bachman - recovering at Cottage Grove after hospitalization
- Darlene Eckert - recovering at Cottage Grove after surgery
- Kyle Kraft - recovering after surgery
- 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

- Del Block - Summit Pointe, Marion

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, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Lord God, Heavenly Father, in Holy Baptism You began Your good work in our catechumens, and You have blessed their instruction and training in Your Word. We implore You to pour out Your Holy Spirit on their hearts and minds so that they will truly love and revere You, confess their faith with joy and boldness, endeavor to live according to Your commandments, and praise and glorify You as their faithful Lord and God. This we ask in Your Son Jesus' name, 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.



✠ *Living as Branches* ✠

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

This Sunday here at Bethany we are celebrating Confirmation Sunday. In the Rite of Confirmation, five young men and women will be confirming their baptismal vows that when they were infants, were taken by others on their behalf. As we will be asking them if they promise to adhere to the teachings and doctrine of the Lutheran Church, they have spent the last two years studying those teachings and doctrine. First, they spent a year studying the Bible itself, then this last year, they studied Martin Luther’s Small Catechism that summarizes and explains the teachings of Scripture.

Martin Luther first mentioned writing a catechism, or a book that summarizes the Christian faith, in 1525. But for some reason, as he was busy changing the world, he couldn’t find the time to write it had to postpone the project. But then in 1529, he visited many churches and pastors as he traveled around Germany. And then he wrote, “*Dear God, what great misery I beheld! The common person, especially in the villages, has no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine. And unfortunately, many pastors are completely unable and unqualified to teach. This is so much so that one is ashamed to speak of it*”. It is at this point, that Dr. Luther began to write his Small Catechism that taught the Christian faith in six chief parts: The Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, Confession, and the Lord’s Supper.

I believe that it’s safe to say that in today’s society, that is not only becoming more and more unfamiliar with the Christian faith but even hostile to it, the vast majority of the people not only do not know the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, or the Lord’s Prayer – but most don’t even know what they are. They have no idea that God gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai or that Jesus taught His disciple to pray to our Father who is in Heaven. And I think that this is not only true for those outside of the Church, but for many inside of it today as well.

Martin Luther wrote, “...*everyone says that they are Christians, have been baptized, and receive the holy Sacraments, even though they cannot recite the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments...Now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all freedom like experts*”. Writing of 16th century Germans, he described many people today who “believe” in Jesus, that is they know of Him or like the idea of Jesus, but they really know nothing about Him. In fact, out of their own selfish pride or their desire to satisfy their sinful nature, they cut themselves off from Him and do whatever it is that they want. This is evidenced by the fact

that many Christians abuse their freedom, that is they believe that if Christ died for the sins of the world, they can just keep on sinning, paying no attention to what Jesus teaches because He will always forgive them in the end!

Of course, Martin Luther was appalled by all of this. But more importantly, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches His disciples against this way of thinking. Whether we are newly confirmed, newly baptized, or nearing the end of our lives on this side of the grave, we need to hear Jesus when He says in our Gospel lesson today, *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:4-5).

When Jesus calls us branches, it shows us our need to be connected to Him. We are to live our lives as a part of the body of Christ, rather than apart from the body of Christ. Just think of a branch laying on the ground. For whatever reason, it’s separated from the tree and therefore there’s no chance for growth or even for life. This branch is no longer capable of producing any kind of leaves, or flowers, or fruit. There really isn’t anything useful about it, so eventually it will be discarded. However, if we as Christians stay connected to the vine, if we stay connected to Jesus, we have the forgiveness of our sins. And where there is forgiveness, there is also life and salvation. And we stay connected in this way by reading, hearing, and following His Word.

Our confirmands this weekend have spent a considerable amount of time and effort studying and thinking about God’s Word over these last two years. And because of that they’ve all grown in their faith. But what if they were to stop now? What if now they were to stop being in God’s Word? What if any of us fail to be in God’s Word? If this were to happen, I think all of us would be able to recognize that this would be like cutting a branch off of the vine and watching it die.

It should be clear to us by now that a branch must stay connected to live and grow. But we need to remember that branches have more to do than just to stay alive. When Jesus calls us branches, it is implied that we will also bear fruit. When a Christian remains connected to Christ through His Word, the results or the fruits of their faith will be seen. Paul says these fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. And St. John reminds us in his first epistle that we are not just to talk about these gifts, but have them in our actions. They are to shape the very things that we do.

And so we don’t just talk about worshipping God – we actually worship God. We don’t just talk about honoring our parents – we actually honor them. We don’t just say that it would be nice if we could control our anger, be kind and patient, or help our neighbor – we actually do these things. And we bear this fruit, not so that we might be attached to the vine, but because we already are. We keep God’s law not to earn His favor, but because we already have it through Jesus Christ. Jesus says, *“...apart from Me you can do nothing.”* Without Him it is impossible to bear any kind of good fruit in our lives. But with faith in Jesus we can say with Paul in Philippians 4:13, *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

What our confirmands will be doing or what kind of fruit any of us will be bearing in the future is only known by God. But whatever it is that God calls us to do, let us do it not by ourselves, but abiding with Him. Let us live our lives as branches attached to vine and bearing the fruits of the Spirit. Amen.

