



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

June 13th, 2021 A.D. – Third Sunday after Pentecost

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 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

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 – Mark 4:26-34

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of

all the seeds on earth, ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Sermon – † Remember the Mustard Seed † *(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

- Opening of Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry on 6/13

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

- Dathan Hinrichs - recovering after a burn
- Wanda (friend of Heitlands) - cancer
- Shirley (sister of Donice McDonald) - cancer
- John (brother of Donice McDonald) - cancer
- Nancy Owens - recovery after surgery
- Jeannine Robinson - health issues
- Darlene Eckert - recovering at Garnett Place
- Kyle Kraft - recovering after surgery
- Kim Neuhaus - health issues
- Elaine Cook - recovering after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery
- Faye Sieck - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Larry & Sharon Easler - Summit Pointe, Marion

Mourning

- Julie Elias - mourning the death of her mother, Vera on 6/6
- Family and friends mourning the death of Al Bachman 5/23
- Loved ones mourning the death of Rev. William Riley on 5/17
- Bev Munson - mourning the death of husband, Blaine on 5/15

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

Let us pray... Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that 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.

Concluding Prayers

Heavenly Father, we commend to Your care those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work and food. Grant that the wealth and resources of this rich land be profitably used so that all persons may find suitable work, fulfilling employment, and daily bread from Your loving hand, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.



✠ *Remember the Mustard Seed* ✠

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

Several years ago, on a hot summer day, a young pregnant lady came into the church at Bethany. Homeless, and not having anywhere else to go, she wasn't looking for a community of believers to join, she was simply looking for a place to get out of the sun and the heat. After having some bottled water and spending some time in the air conditioning, I was able to take her and her boyfriend to the grocery store to buy a few things to eat.

Shortly thereafter, another lady came to the church one what I believe was a Saturday or a Sunday. She had been living in her car and asked if we had any food for her grandchildren that were with her. Thankfully, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League was having an event at the time, and they eagerly shared what they had prepared for lunch with this lady and her family.

It wasn't too long after those ladies stopped by that we decided to gather some very basic food items to keep here at the church. These items, donated by members of the congregation would be available to anyone who was in need, especially if we couldn't immediately buy food from a store or the LWML wasn't having an event at the time help was needed. At first, we kept these items in various places around the church, but eventually settled on keeping them on a shelf in a closet across the hall from the church office. This single shelf of food was the meager beginning of Bethany's first food pantry.

And then, along came the coronavirus. Back in the Spring of 2020, as everything began shutting down to prevent the virus from spreading, we quickly realized that many people would be suffering economic hardship. Therefore, the members of Bethany began bringing in household items like dish soap and personal hygiene products like deodorant and toothpaste. Again, these items were available to members and non-members, whoever it was that could use just a bit of help at the time. And given the generosity of so many people who donated goods, as well as gift cards, that little shelf in the closet wasn't going to be big enough. So, we emptied off several shelves of old books, and essentially made half of the library our second pantry.

And now, on June 13, Bethany will officially open our latest version of the food pantry in our congregation. Sometime during the winter of 2020-21, a member of Bethany gave me a tour of what was happening across town at Matthew 25, an organization whose mission is to empower people to transform neighborhoods. Looking at how they were already meeting the needs of people and how they will continue to do so in the future, the question was asked why couldn't Bethany do even more than we already were, to reach out with the love of God to those who are facing food

insecurity in our community. So, working with many members of our congregation, including the Boards of Education, Human Care, and the Trustees, as well as the Church Council, in just a few short months, the impressive set up that we know have come into being through the hard work and dedication of many, many people. To some this progression of Bethany helping those in our congregation and community may be surprising. But Jesus in our Gospel lesson tells us that this is actually how the Kingdom of God works.

In our reading for today, Jesus tells us the Parable of the Mustard Seed. It was accepted in Biblical times that the mustard seed was the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet when it was planted, it would quickly grow to become one of the largest ornamental plants of the time. The mustard seed was seemingly insignificant at first. But as it grew, it would become larger and stronger until it was so big that other forms of life, namely the birds, would find provision and protection within the shade of its' branches.

When Jesus claimed that the glorious and gracious reign of God was brought about by His presence, it must have seemed strange to many at the time. Here was a man born into humble beginnings. Of course, He performed miracles and His teaching was with impressive authority, but He didn't live in a palace or teach in a great school. His disciples were not princes, but fisherman, tax collectors, and the like. Looking at Jesus throughout His ministry, and many times after His death and resurrection, He and the reign of God that He brought with Him, certainly seemed insignificant to most observers.

But remember the mustard the seed! Looks can be, and certainly are deceiving in the Kingdom of God! Not only did Jesus' followers grow from a few disciples hiding in a room after His crucifixion to billions of people around the world since, but what seemed to be defeat at the hands of Jesus' earthly enemies, actually became the victory over all of humanity's enemies of sin, death, and the devil himself. And as Christians, we believe that when Christ comes again, His glory at that time will outshine the splendor of every kingdom on earth.

Explaining how the Kingdom of God works, this parable provides encouragement for every Christian that has ever wondered if God's Kingdom will actually prevail in the fallen world around us. Every child who has struggled in school with her studies or with classmates who bully him; every adult who faces the struggles ill health or loneliness at the end of a life lived in faithfulness to God; to anyone who trusts in the Lord and yet worries about their friends, their family, their next pay check, or their next meal – can find hope by remembering the mustard seed. For God's work may seem insignificant at first, but over time, it grows so that everyone may find peace and comfort within.

As the church proclaims the Word of God, baptizes all nations, and distributes the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, we know that those in the Kingdom (those who have faith in Christ) will ultimately be saved into eternity and enjoy the paradise of a new heaven and a new earth. But until Christ returns, Christians will continue to work so that all people might find relief from their suffering in the shade of the Kingdom of God today.

This is why our congregation does everything that it does. We are centered and built on God's Word and Sacraments that the Spirit uses to give faith Christ and God's grace to every sinner in His name. But having been forgiven and being in God's Kingdom we have Stephen Ministers and Care Warriors to serve people today. We give hot chocolate to high school students across the street and raise money for students across the globe so they can know God's love today. Looking at our congregation some may think that all of this is insignificant. But remember the mustard seed! Entrusting what we have into His care, God will use anything we have, so that all people may find shade and comfort in the small branch of the kingdom that is our church.

It is my hope and prayer that this is what will happen with the new Bethany Lutheran Food Pantry. When it first started, it may not have looked like much, and God willing we may look back some day and see that what we have now is not much either! But regardless, we live under the gracious rule and reign of God. We live in the Kingdom of God that has been made known to us through Jesus. And while at times it may not seem like all that much or all that glorious, we have the promise that in this kingdom, God will give us everything that we need in this life and in the next. Amen.

