



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

October 3rd, 2021 A.D. The 19th 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 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 128

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!

² You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

³ Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

⁴ Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

⁵ The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!

⁶ May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!

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

(Mark 10:2-16)

²Pharisees came up and in order to test [Jesus] asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." ⁵And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

¹⁰And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” ¹⁶And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Sermon – ✠ *Where Do We Put Our Horses?* ✠ (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

- LWML Sunday

Entrusting into God's Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Workers in the Church, at Bethany and throughout the World

Healing

- Carol Edwards - recovering after hospitalization
- Ed Schumacher - shoulder injury
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery
- Faye Sieck - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Shirley Kellogg - at home

Mourning

- Mildred Herman (grandmother of Carolyn Zimmerman) - died 9/30
- Ray (father of Deb Mills) - died 9/4
- Erma (mother of Rita Tiedt) - died 8/30

Serving Our Country

- Ben - serving in the Iowa National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Amy Smith)- serving in the U.S. Navy
- 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... Merciful Father, Your patience and loving-kindness toward us have no end. Grant that by Your Holy Spirit we may always think and do those things that are pleasing in Your sight; 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

Most gracious God, we give thanks for the joy and the blessings that You grant to husbands and wives. Assist them always by Your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep their marriage vows, grow in love toward You and for each other, and come at last to the eternal joys that You have promised; 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.



✠ *Where Do We Put Our Horses?* ✠

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

As we begin today, I would like to take just a moment to address a problem here at Bethany that I am deeply worried about. As many of you know, attendance on Sunday mornings has been steadily rising since we resumed our public worship services during the COVID pandemic. Also, almost everyone who comes to Bethany on Sunday does not live within reasonable walking distance of the church and therefore must get here in ways other than walking. Therefore, with so many people coming to church on Sunday who are not walking, I'm worried about where we are going to put all of the horses. I will therefore propose to the Trustees that we install some hitching posts over on the west side of the parking lot, so that everyone can tie their horse up when they come to church. Of course, we not only have to worry about our horses wandering off, but also horse thieves. Therefore, I will also ask the elder for each Sunday to keep an eye on all of our horses while we're in worship. And as we all know that horses tend to make a mess as they are standing around, I also propose that we ask the Youth Group to go clean up around the hitching posts after services are over. That will not only keep the church grounds clean, but also help the youth to build some character.

Now all of this may sound a bit ridiculous to you right now. I think that we all know that Bethany does not really have a problem of where to put all the horses during worship. And this is not because no one is coming to church on Sunday. Nor is it because most people are unable to walk to Bethany for worship. Rather, we don't have a horse problem at Bethany because almost no one uses a horse to get around anymore. And that is because something better has come along – the horseless carriage, aka the automobile. Because we have cars, and trucks, and minivans and SUV's, the question of where to put our horses has become obsolete and irrelevant.

In many ways this is similar to the question that Jesus was asked in our text for today. In Mark 10:2 we read, “*And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’*” Since Mark tells us the Pharisees were testing Jesus with this question, we know that their motives were far from pure. It seems likely that they were aware of King Herod and his wife, Herodias, killing John the Baptist killed because the Baptist spoke out about their marriage, that came about after they each had divorced their previous spouses. It’s therefore not unreasonable that the Pharisees were hoping Jesus’ answer to this question could be used against Him and He would end up like John.

However, Jesus avoids the trap easily by asking the Pharisees what is written in Scripture. They respond by referring to Deuteronomy 24:1 that essentially says a man may put a certificate of divorce in his wife’s hand if she has “*no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her.*” Of course, the question this would always raise is, “What is meant by ‘some indecency’?” While it would certainly include adultery, could it also include infertility or even bad cooking? Regardless, Jesus not only points the Pharisees to the Word of God for the answer, but He shows the Pharisees through that Word that their question is really quite irrelevant and obsolete. Much like asking where we would put our horses today.

Jesus says, “*Because of your hardness of heart [Moses] wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*” What Jesus is saying here is that God had Moses write that divorce was allowed because people are sinful. Going all the way back to creation, when Adam and Eve lived in Paradise without sin, there was no such thing as ending a marriage or having any type of bad relationship. It is only after sin shows up, that such things as divorce become an unwanted necessity in this sinful world.

But now, something has changed. Jesus says at the beginning of His ministry in Mark 1:15, “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.*” When Jesus is around so is the kingdom, or the rule, of God. And we see what that kingdom looks like when it breaks into this sinful world with Jesus’ coming: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, storms are calmed, demons are driven out, the dead are raised and...husbands and wives don’t fight, let alone get divorced. So when the Pharisees question Jesus about divorce, it really is an obsolete question. That’s a question for those outside the kingdom of God. A question for Moses who had to deal with the sinful world, not for Jesus who is restoring creation. Those of us who have been baptized, whose sins have been forgiven by God’s mercy and live in His kingdom of grace won’t even think of such questions because we know that Christ has come and will come again.

Unfortunately however, as we wait for Christ’s coming again, God’s kingdom has come with Jesus, but not quite completely. We in a sense, have had only a foretaste of the feast to come. And therefore, as Martin Luther has famously said, “We are simultaneously saints and sinners”. Yes we are saints forgiven by God, but we also are sinners who are in constant need of God’s forgiveness. That is why until Christ returns, Christians will always sin and there are three reasons why a person may divorce their husband or wife without sinning. Remember, because it is brought about by sin, divorce is never what God wants to see happen. But in cases of adultery, malicious desertion (meaning a person has left their spouse with no intention of coming back), or abuse a person may divorce and marry again without sinning. And every Christian needs to remember that we are called bear one another’s burdens, whether a person is suffering from their own sin, or that of their spouse or the world.

And so, where should we put our horses? You may want to ask yourself this obsolete question the next time you find yourself tempted to live outside of God's kingdom. And use that question to remember, that something better than that old creation ruined by sin has come along. Christ has come. And He has suffered and died and rose again, not only bringing us forgiveness and salvation by His grace alone, but also restoring creation to Himself. That work is not completely done yet - we still sin and live in a sinful world. But God's kingdom is here with the coming of Christ. As we wait for Him to come again, let us live and work firmly planted in that kingdom, keeping our eyes fixed not on the sin of this world, but on the new creation that God has already begun to restore. A creation where there is no divorce or any broken relationships at all. A new creation where there is no sickness, no tears, and no death as we live with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

