



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

October 31st, 2021 A.D. – Reformation 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

(From Psalms 119 and 34)

I will speak of your testimonies before kings, [O Lord,]

and shall not be put to shame.

I will bless the LORD at all times;

his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul makes its boast in the LORD;

let the humble hear and be glad.

Come, O children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

The LORD redeems the life of his servants;

none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

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

(John 8:31-36)

³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

Athanasian Creed

Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.

And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit: the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal, just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinities, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.

In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet there are not three Almighty's, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords. The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone. The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding. Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped. Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.

But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man. He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity. Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

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

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

- Charlotte (mother of Chris Frampton) - recovering after surgery
- Dana (brother of Melissa Loney) - hospitalized with COVID
- Cathy (sister-in-law of Melissa Loney) - recovering after COVID
- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Ron (father of Jo Godbey & Justin Kirkpatrick) - recovering after hospitalization
- Don (brother of Joann Strang) - health issues
- Faye Sieck - recovering after hospitalization
- Tim & Nancy (parents of Christine Erickson) - health issues
- Ed Schumacher - shoulder injury
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery

Shut-Ins

- Del Block - The Gardens

Mourning

- Brenda (sister-in-law of Happels) - died 10/8
- Mildred (grandmother of Carolyn Zimmerman) - died 9/30

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...Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; 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

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.



✠ **Truth** ✠

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

During His trial before Pontius Pilate, Jesus says in John 18, “*For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice*”. To this, the Roman governor responds with a question that has been asked for centuries and is still being asked today, “*What is truth?*”

We know that the truth is important. We teach our children to tell the truth. We hear of people searching for the truth and more than likely, have tried to do this at some point ourselves. Yet like Pilate, we might have a hard time knowing what exactly truth is. Philosophers are not always helpful, as they say things like, “Truth is the opposite of false” or that it is “whatever agrees with reality”. Even Google seems to be stumped by the question, “What is truth?” When I looked up the definition of truth it said, “the quality or state of being true”. So I looked up “true” and was taken directly to a YouTube video of the 80’s hit song from the group Spandau Ballet (called *True*).

But as think many of us are finding out, as we live in what is increasingly being called an Age of Disinformation, the truth is becoming harder and harder to find.

Of course, knowing what the truth is is more than just an intellectual pursuit. The truth actually matters in life. As we've seen over the last year and a half, what we think is the truth helps us determine what to do or not to do during a pandemic. The truth helps us understand what is happening, if anything, to the climate and the environment. The truth helps us decide who to vote for and how to overcome and deal with real problems like racism or generational poverty. More than just the interest of academics, the truth has real implications for all of our lives, how we live them, and what happens to us after them.

In our text for this Reformation Day, Jesus had just finished teaching that He would allow Himself to be crucified according to the Father's will and we are told that many of the Jewish people believed in Him. Jesus then says to those Jews who believed in Him, "*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*" (John 8:31-32). What the Jews mean when they respond to this has been debated somewhat over the years. There are some who say that they have forgotten their history. That they don't know what is true, because Abraham's descendants were slaves in both Egypt and Babylon. But I would like to think that these people are smarter than what we give them credit for. I think they identified themselves as Jews, that is, decedents of Abraham, and then without forgetting Egypt and Babylon, remembered that at the time it was forbidden for a Jew to enslave another Jew. So, while their ancestors were slaves in Egypt, they themselves never had been. Therefore, how could they be set free?

But Jesus was not talking about the slavery that keeps people in chains of iron. He was talking about the slavery that keeps people in the shackles of their sin and leads to death. He says, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*" (John 8:34-36)

As we celebrate the Reformation this weekend on the 504th anniversary of Luther posting his 95 Theses against the selling of indulgences, it is worth noting that Jesus says in our text that His disciples abide in His Word. The Reformation saw a lot of disagreements between Luther and Church of Rome. But at the heart of all of them, was this idea of where do Jesus' followers abide? Or put another way, where do they get their ideas. Luther maintained that it must be as Jesus says, the Word of God.

And when people abide in the Word of God, when they let the Word of God that is found in the Bible dwell in their hearts and guide them in their lives and their beliefs, Jesus says a funny thing happens – you will know the truth. This of course is not an intellectual or an academic truth. It's actually something bigger. When you abide in Jesus' Word you know Jesus. You know God. And God will set you free from your sin.

Going back to Pilate in John 18, did you ever think it strange that an answer doesn't seem to be given to his question, "What is truth?" After all, truth is only mentioned a handful of times in the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, and Luke. But in John's Gospel, this idea of truth is brought up an astounding 25 times! And then, when someone finally asks, "What is truth?", does John forget to write down the answer for us?!?!

Or maybe an answer is given. Maybe the entire Gospel of John is the answer. For there at the very beginning of the Gospel of John we are told that the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us and His glory was "full of grace and truth" (1:14). In John 14:6, Jesus says, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*" Speaking of our Heavenly Father, Jesus says, "...He who sent

me is true” (John 8:26). The Word of God teaches us that truth cannot be known apart from God because God is Truth. In fact, Paul in Romans 1, when describing people committing idolatry, that is worshiping false gods, says, “*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie*” (Romans 1:25 [Pastor’s translation]).

So, when Pilate asks, “What is truth?”, far from not having an answer, we have the only answer. John’s Gospel has been telling us all along that God is truth. And look what happens to the Truth. Pilate goes back out to the crowds and says he finds no guilt in the Truth, yet the crowds yell for Barabbas to be released instead (John 18:38,40). Then the Truth is flogged and beaten by the Roman soldiers (19:1-3). The Truth is declared innocent once again, but this time the chief priests and officers shout, “Crucify Him!” (19:6). And that is exactly what happens. The Truth carries His own cross out to the place called the Place of the Skull and He is crucified (19:17-18).

Pilate did not recognize this Truth. Nor did many of those who once had believed in Him. But for those who abide in the Words of Jesus, they know the Truth. They know God. And the only way to know God is to know Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

This Truth is not academic or intellectual, but it does change the way we live and function in this world, and certainly our lives in the world to come. Luther knew that the Truth set us free from having to earn our salvation and we celebrate this every year. Today, knowing the Truth, we no longer need to live in fear of a virus, and yet at the same time we live to help and love others during this pandemic. Knowing the Truth, no longer do we live for ourselves, taking advantage of every opportunity for our own pleasure or wellbeing. But knowing the Truth we become good stewards of all of God’s creation. No longer do we look at those who are different from us with suspicion or hatred, but we see people from every race and nation, those who are rich or poor, those who are sick and are healthy, as brothers and sisters for whom the Truth has died because He loves them. And knowing the Truth, we have a real and certain hope that, even though we may have often run after idols or lies in our life, He has died to forgive us. This is the Truth. This is Jesus Christ. True God and True Man who has died and rose again to set us free indeed! Amen.

