



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**The Second Sunday in Advent**

**December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 A.D.**

*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 66:1-12*

Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name;  
**give to him glorious praise!**

<sup>3</sup> Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!

**So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.**

<sup>4</sup> All the earth worships you and sings praises to you;

**they sing praises to your name.”**

<sup>5</sup> Come and see what God has done:

**he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.**

<sup>6</sup> He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.

**There did we rejoice in him,**

<sup>7</sup> who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—

**let not the rebellious exalt themselves.**

<sup>8</sup> Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard,

<sup>9</sup> **who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip.**

<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.

<sup>11</sup> **You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs;**

<sup>12</sup> you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water;

**yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.**

*For those with access to the internet, you may now play today’s worship video, located on Bethany’s website ([www.bethanycr.org](http://www.bethanycr.org)) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....*

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## **Scripture Lesson** – Luke 3:1-14

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea

and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup>As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,  
and the rough places shall become level ways,  
<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

<sup>7</sup>He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” <sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

**Sermon** – † *Preparing the Way for the Way* † (A copy is included at the end of this service.)

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### **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**

- Advent Season

#### **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**

- Cindy Broadwater - upcoming surgery on 12/6
- Tracy Donels - upcoming surgery on 12/9
- Emily Kroemer - back pain
- Ryan Urban - recovering after surgery
- Marcia (mother of M Rinderknecht & E Heller) - health issues
- Lee Rathje - broken wrist, recovering after fall
- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Faye Sieck - recovering after hospitalization
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery

**Shut-Ins**

- Shirley Kellogg - at home

**Mourning**

- Pastor Dana (brother of Melissa Loney) - died 11/25
- Bob (relative of Luci Stoelting & Melinda Crow) - died 11/13
- Steve (friend of Pete Larson) - died 11/6

**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**

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, 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.**



## ✝ *Preparing the Way for the Way* ✝

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

As we continue to move through December, it seems that everyone is getting ready for Christmas. However, as this happens, it is apparent that the world gets ready for Christmas in one way and Christians in perhaps another. The world gets ready for just one great big day on December 25<sup>th</sup>. To be sure there may be parties, travel, and events leading up to it, but after that big day usually all that is left over is a big pile of wrapping paper, travel back home, and some bills to pay.

This isn't the case for the Church. For us, when Christmas comes, it should stick around for awhile. It lingers on through the season of Epiphany as we celebrate Christ's revelation to the nations. We continue to ponder the saving work of "God in the flesh" through the season of Lent, We celebrate the resurrection at Easter. And the church sings its' Christmas praises well into Pentecost and Summer, as we make Christmas stay in our lives.

But even as we celebrate the first coming of Jesus into this world as a child in Bethlehem, we also prepare for His Second Coming in the clouds with the angels. And this preparation is truly strange and foreign to the rest of the world around us. For rather than sending cards and hanging decorations, this is a preparation of the heart.

In the Gospel lesson from Luke, God gives us exactly that: a ready heart, through the Advent prophet – John the Baptist. He is the one whom the Lord appointed to clear the way for His first coming. And as we can see, he did just that. There was nothing half-hearted about John and no tiptoeing around for him: "*Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees,*" he announced. All the dead wood was to be cut out of the Lord's forest. "*Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire*" (v 9).

Those words may be a little unsettling when they fall upon our ears. And they should be. For the sad truth is that even during this holy time of year, very often you and I don't produce the good fruit our Lord expects. We simply don't love God with all our heart and all of our soul and all of our strength - much less love our neighbor as ourselves. Despite our best efforts and good intentions, there are those we have hurt and those we have failed to help. Our thoughts and desires are darkened with sin and there is nothing good to be found within our sinful nature.

But if John's words are unsettling, hold on, for that's how preparing the way for the Lord's coming begins - when you and I are laid low and crushed by the hammer of God's Law, so that we might be lifted up and comforted by the Good News or the Gospel. The way of the Lord is, John tells us, the way of repentance. That is, it calls for change. A change of mind and heart, which only God can bring about by the power of His Spirit working through His Word and Sacraments.

That's what we, and all people need this Advent season: a change of heart so that we can clean out our messed-up nature so cluttered with sin, and clear out our lives, littered with shame and death, so that they might be filled with the life of Jesus Christ instead.

Not that such a change comes easy, mind you. It means the death of the habits that we may hold dear in our lives. And such habits always die hard. It's always much easier to love and serve ourselves than it is to love and serve God and our neighbor for Jesus' sake. Just as it was easier for people to keep both of their tunics, or tax collectors to take more than they should, or soldiers to extort money by threats and accusations. That's why the way of the Lord and preparing for the

Lord to come must first take us to the cross, before it leads to joy. To the cross where we not only see our Savior dying but also our old sinful ways breathing their last. That's why the Christian life is a life of constant repentance, where we have contrition of our sin and then faith that God forgives them for Jesus' sake.

So let's stir up our hearts this Advent season, or should we say, "Let's let God stir up our hearts this Advent season". Lift up the valleys of our deep despair, bring down the mountain peaks of our lofty pride, and straighten out our crooked ways.

What exactly this means for you I cannot tell. For in our text we see that it means different things for different people, depending on who they are and where they are in life. For tax collectors listening to the Baptist, the way of the Lord meant to be honest; for soldiers, it meant to be content and not take what didn't belong to them. For everyone, it meant generosity and mercy, giving food and clothing to those who had none, in Jesus' name and because of what He has done for them. And Christians did this not by threat of punishment nor the promise of reward, but only by the grace of Almighty God.

The Son of God, who came down from heaven and was incarnate, or made man, by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, will change our hearts and make them new. He who left the Heavenly throne in humility to be cradled in a feeding trough came into this world to be close to you. And when He draws near, Christ cleans our hearts and straightens out our sinful ways. He tears down our pride that wants to earn our own salvation, so that we must trust in Him alone. He softens our hardened hearts so that we might live in the peace of holy ways instead of our sin. With Jesus close, we are lifted out of grief and despair to the comfort of God's presence and the joy of salvation.

So, let's continue to get ready. Get ready for December 25<sup>th</sup> to be sure. But above all else, let us prepare for the coming of Christ - into the world again, but also into our hearts. Amen!

And now may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds forever in Christ Jesus. Amen.

