



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

December 26th, 2021 A.D. – 1st Sunday after Christmas

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.

Introit

From Isaiah 52 and Psalm 98

P The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations,

C and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The LORD has made known his salvation;

he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;

break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

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

Luke 2:22-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had

seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Sermon – † *Hearing is Believing* † (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

- Celebration of Christ's birth

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 the world

Healing

- Ron Prescott - back pain
- Dave Christian - hospitalization
- Carol Grimminger - recovering after fall
- Carl (relative of Bonnie Bubke) - health issues
- Janet (mother of Jennifer Shoemaker) - recovering after surgery
- Marlys Jaspersen - recovering after fall
- Burt & Jan (friends of Bonnie Bubke) - health issues
- Charlotte (granddaughter of Karen Swalley) - health issues
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering after surgery
- Tracy Donels - recovering after surgery
- 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

- Nadine Wax - at home

Mourning

- Don (brother of Joann Strang) - died 12/21
- Randy (friend of John Hamm) - died 12/12
- Fred Schuchmann - died 12/11
- Pastor Dana (brother of Melissa Loney) - died 11/25

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

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through 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.



✠ *Hearing is Believing* ✠

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

There was a woman who was looking for part-time work and applied for a job taking care of a couple's precious firstborn son. She was chosen as one of the five "finalists" for the job, and a few days after being interviewed for the position, the telephone rang. She was a bit surprised that the parents offered her the position. When she later asked why she had been chosen from all of the other candidates that applied, the parents explained, "You were the only one who asked to hold our son in their arms."

Simeon in our Gospel lesson today could not help holding Jesus in his arms. We read that it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah. Seeing Jesus he says, "*Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your Word; for my eyes have seen your salvation.*" How blessed Simeon was to see the newborn Jesus with his own eyes. How privileged to hold Jesus in his arms! We may wish that we could do the same. If only we could see Jesus Himself, or touch Him, we would be blessed beyond measure!

Well, perhaps. This would no doubt be nice, but the truth of the matter is that while God works to bless and redeem us through our hearts, our eyes, and even our arms, it all begins with our ears. For the God who saves is the God who speaks, and we receive His Word, whether we are a righteous and devout man in first century Jerusalem, or a small child in Sunday School at Bethany by hearing and believing it.

The importance of God's Word is seen in just the third verse of the entire Bible when we read, "*And God said...*" (Genesis 1:3). We also know, reading of the fall of humanity in Genesis, that the first sin was to doubt the Word of God. Adam and Eve heard God tell them not to eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden, but along came Satan asking, "*Did God actually say...?*" (Genesis 3:1).

God's Word is so important to us, but our sin makes us spiritually dead. Unable to really hear God's Word, we become incapable of holding on to His promises, let alone doing what He says. Even the blessed virgin Mary, who so trustingly believed the angel when told she would give birth to a son, must have wanted to believe her eyes – seeing her beautiful son – instead of Simeon's prophecy that her child "*is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel...and a sword will pierce through your own soul also...*" (Luke 2:34-35).

But without God's Word, what are we left with today, after our Christmas celebrations pass? What do the words of the world, the devil, and our sinful nature tell us? That no one really cares about much of anything these days? That it's time to hunker down for a long winter trying to avoid the latest variant of the virus? Without God's Word we are left with our weak and fallen human senses and the fleeting nature of the world's version of Christmas asking, "Is that all there is?"

But with God's Word there is life and salvation. For we are saved not by works, but by faith. And faith comes through hearing. And not only are we saved for eternity by God's Word, we are also equipped to live as ones who have been saved, to live good and upright Christian lives of hope, peace, love, and joy. Think of almost any of God's saints and the amazing deeds they have done. Whether we are talking of Abraham or David, Simeon or St. Paul, or even Martin Luther or the saints that dwell among us today, they acted according to God's will because they had heard God's Word.

Seeing and holding are nice, but even in the Sacraments, all other senses serve our hearing of God's Word in the Scriptures. Newborn babies are saved and receive Christ's redemptive work by hearing their names' connected with God's name in Baptism, sometimes before they can even see who is holding them! We begin to hear the Gospel even before we are born when our families speak and sing the Word of God. St. John writes in his first epistle on behalf of all of the prophets and apostles, "*We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error*" (I John 4:6). Thus, we grow in our Christian faith as we are able to discern the truth from lies by hearing the voice of Christ through John and the rest of the prophets and the apostles.

How will we keep God's Word in our ears after Christmas? How will we keep His Word into the New Year and beyond? Remember the words spoken at the Baptismal font. Remember the Words spoken during Absolution, at the Communion Rail, at the Altar and in the Pulpit. Remember the hymns we sing and the prayers God has taught us and the ones we offer ourselves.

Simeon and Anna had the great privilege to see and hold their Lord and Savior. But their seeing and hold began by believing the Word of God that had come to them. Today, we join with Simeon and Anna and all believers in having faith in the Christ Child. Faith that first comes from hearing. And when we hear that God has sent His only Son Jesus to save us, when we hear the

God given message of Christmas, there is no holiday let down. We continue to rejoice, we continue to work in our Lord's kingdom...we continue to sing to God, something along the lines of what Simeon spoke, "*Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel*" (Luke 2:29-32). Amen.

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

