



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

January 9th, 2022 A.D. – Epiphany 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 Psalm 45)

I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;

therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;

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

(Matthew 2:1-12)

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶"*And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.*"

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose

went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Sermon – † *Reacting to Jesus* † (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

- Epiphany
- Support of Project 24 in Kenya

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
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Don Hein - upcoming surgery January 10
- Bob (husband of Carolyn Sternowski) - recovering after COVID
- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - back pain
- Dave Christian - recovering at home after cardiac surgery
- Carol Grimminger - recovering at home after fall
- Marlys Jaspersen - recovering after surgery
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering after surgery
- Tracy Donels - recovering after surgery
- Emily Kroemer - back pain
- Lee Rathje - broken wrist, recovering after fall

Shut-Ins

- Larry & Sharon Easler - Summit Pointe, Marion

Mourning

- Gabe (relative of Lee & Brenda Heims) - died 1/3
- Don (brother of Joann Strang) - died 12/21
- Roger (uncle of Kris Dunn) - died 12/17

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...O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; 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.



✠ *Reacting to Jesus* ✠

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

When the Magi left their home in the east, they traveled to Jerusalem. This was a mistake. Priestly astrologers, sometimes identified as Wise Men, the Magi didn't appear to be all that wise. For while they saw a star rise and understood it to mean that a new king of the Jews had been born, they thought they would find this new king in Jerusalem, where all the "important" people lived. But not knowing exactly where to go at this point, they go to the current ruler, King Herod. After consulting with the chief priests and scribes, who themselves consult the Holy Scriptures, Herod hatches a plan to kill Jesus. He tells the Magi to go find the newborn Christ and return to tell him His location. Once the wise men reveal where Jesus is, Herod will quickly kill this new threat to his throne. And thus, we see how many people, even today, react to Jesus.

First there is King Herod. King Herod believed the Scriptures when they said that this new king would be born in Bethlehem. He believed the Scriptures when they said this new king would be the long awaited Messiah. He knew that Christ had been born. Yet, this was not convenient for him. What the Scriptures teach he perceives to be a threat to his power and control – a threat to his way of life and what his sinful nature wanted to do. And so Herod does everything he can to get rid of Jesus.

Many people, especially outside of the church, feel the same way about Jesus today. They celebrate Christmas in one way or another, and even know that it is about the birth of Christ. They believe in God and know that the Bible is a special book. But when push comes to shove, they don't want to get too close to Jesus. They're afraid that He'll ask too much of them, that He'll make them give up their way of life, or their little kingdom that they've created for themselves, where they rule over whatever it is that makes them happy. And so, they will do whatever they can to get rid Christ in their own ways and in their own lives. People like Herod, want themselves to be their own kings and queens, their own gods, and will not have it any other way.

Next to Herod we find the chief priests and the scribes. They know the Scriptures very well. They even teach them to other people. But they themselves don't do what they say. They tell Herod and the Magi that Jesus, the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, but do they go and worship Him? Do they bring Him gifts? It appears that they did not. These scribes and chief priests are also like many people **in** today. They know the Bible well. They attend services regularly, and maybe even bible studies. They can quote Scripture to their friends and family, and like the scribes

and chief priests, everyone looks to them as good, moral, religious people. But when it comes down to actually doing what one says they believe, they fall short. They will teach that the Bible says one should not gossip and tell lies, but that is what they do. They are always telling others to care for other people, but they spend most of their time looking out for themselves or their own interests. They will tell their friends that one is saved through faith in Christ, but then they will rely on their own good works for salvation. We call them hypocrites - people who say one thing and do another. And unfortunately, most of us fall into this category at least every once in a while, and it is not where God wants us to be.

Where God does want us to be in our relationship with Him is closer to where the Magi were. Not to be sure, the Magi were no saints. They were pagan astrologers, with no indication of worshipping or having faith in the One True God. Despite what some Christian music might say, they were not kings, but rather servants of kings. Also, as I mentioned before, it appears that they weren't all that smart. Not only did they go to the wrong place to see Jesus, but they were almost tricked by Herod in his murderous plot against Jesus. But what these unexpected travelers from the east show us is that if we think that we have to be a certain way, have certain things, be so smart and wise for God to use us, or God to reach out to us – well we are mistaken. Just look at the Magi. There is literally nothing about themselves that makes them worthy to be used by God or even to be called by God.

But God, out of His love for all people, sent the Magi the sign of a rising star. They didn't completely understand what the star meant, but they went nevertheless to worship Jesus. And when they were eventually led to Him, through the guidance of God's Word and the star, they brought their gifts to Him. They did not expect any favors or miracles from Jesus. Unlike the Scribes and the chief priests, the Magi do what they say. They worship Jesus. They serve Him with their gifts. Unlike Herod, they were willing to give something up of themselves because of who Jesus was, the King of all Kings who came to serve us.

If we think like Herod, that Christ will force us to give up things in our lives, we are wildly missing the point. It is true, that being a disciple of Christ we should behave and act in certain ways that the rest of the world will not understand. We might have to give up being gossip. A lover of money. Someone who only pursues the desire of the flesh. Following Christ, He does call us to give up our sins, some of which we might think are a little too fun; too convenient or beneficial to our wants and will. But this is making ourselves out to be our own kings and queens once again. For if we do follow the true King, instead of losing parts of lives, we will have life and have it abundantly. For Christ did not come as a king who lords His power and control over us, but as one who serves His people. The Magi did not find Him in the palaces of Jerusalem, but in a house in Bethlehem. He did not have the people serve Him, but He served us when He died for our sin. And this is the love of God that we see in Jesus Christ. In the same way that He called the imperfect Magi, He reaches out to everyone of you, to everyone of your family members, every one of your friends, co-workers and classmates and neighbors – so they may come to know and worship Christ as their Lord and Savior. This saving faith in Christ that is never earned, but always a gift of God is what He wants from us and all nations. Amen.

