



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

Merry Christmas!

December 25th, 2022 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

(From Isaiah 9 and Psalm 98)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
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!

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

(John 1:1-18)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

Sermon ✠ Know the Ending ✠ *(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

- Tom Larson - recovering after surgery
- Bonnie Bubke - recovered after hospitalization

Entrusting into God's Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- John (brother of Donice McDonald) - cancer treatment
- Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
- Raymond (father of Lora Raymon) - hospitalization
- Nora (great granddaughter of Pat Krekeler) - In NICU
- Courtney (Monday morning coffee friend) - cancer treatments
- Jean (mother of Kristi Montague) - recovering after stroke
- Don Hein - recovering after surgery
- Lucas Heller - recovering after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after tumor treatment
- Doug Knutson - recovering at home after surgery
- Donna Birkicht - health issues
- Dave Dohrmann - recovering after surgery
- Stephen Stepanek - brain cancer treatment
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Melba Davison– Terrace Glen Village, Marion

Bethany's Prayer List (continued...)

Mourning, friends and family of

- Joyce Fritz - died 12/15
- Carol (mother of Kris Larson) - died 12/15

Serving Our Country

- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, deployed to Poland
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - National Guard, deployed

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; 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

Almighty God, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that He may rule and direct us according to Your will, comfort us in all our temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth that we, being steadfast in faith, may increase in all good works and in the end obtain everlasting life; 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.



✠ Know the Ending ✠

Merry Christmas to all you, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

While Christians around the world have been getting ready to celebrate Christmas since the beginning of Advent, it seems that the entire world has been focused this last month on the tiny nation of Qatar. There, in this nation bordering Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, the 2022 Men’s World Cup was being played. For those of you who may not know, the World Cup is the biggest, most important tournament in the world’s biggest sport – soccer. Held every four years, players around the world gather to compete in the World Cup for the opportunity to lift the solid gold trophy and bring home glory for their country.

Having played soccer and having a son who plays soccer, I enjoy watching soccer, especially the World Cup. And when I do, my favorite soccer player to watch and cheer for is Lionel Messi, who plays for Argentina. For years now, Messi has been considered one of, if not thee, best player in the world. But while he had won every single award and trophy a soccer player could imagine, he had never won the World Cup. And this World Cup was going to be his last. So I really, really wanted to see him win.

I watched almost all of the games that Argentina played in pool play. I followed what Messi and the Argentinian team were doing on their days off. And I cheered every time they advanced in the tournament, all the way to the final game. Argentina made it to the championship game and Messi, my favorite, would have one last chance to become a World Cup champion.

There was only one problem...for me anyways. The championship game was going to be played Sunday morning at 9am! It would start right in the middle of Early Service here at Bethany and would end just about the time Late Service was getting started. So of course, I wouldn’t be able to watch the game. “No problem”, I thought however. I’ll just tell everyone at church not to tell me what the score of the game is; I’ll avoid any kind of email, text messages, radio or television announcements that might say the final score, and when I get home later that day, I’ll watch a replay of the game. And that’s what I planned to do.

But after everyone had the left the church last Sunday, I couldn’t help myself. I had to know. I couldn’t go home to watch the game and I couldn’t wait any longer. So, I pulled out my phone and checked the news. And there I saw a picture...it was my favorite player, Lionel Messi, lifting the golden trophy! Argentina beat France in the World Cup final, and Messi was finally a World Cup champion.

Now you may be thinking, “What on earth does Lionel Messi or the World Cup have to do with Christmas?” And truth be told, I have to say, “Not much”. But the reason I told you that story is because of what happened when I did finally get home that Sunday. You see, I was so excited that Argentina and my favorite player had won the World Cup, I sat down to watch the final game even though I knew who had won. Now normally when I would watch a game where I really wanted someone to win, I would on a roller coaster of emotions. When my team would make a good play, I’d be elated. But if the other team made a good play, or my team made a mistake, my excitement would plummet into despair.

But not this time. Knowing that my team had already won the game, when I watched the replay, I was happy all of the time. Even when I saw that France had scored two goals in two

minutes to tie the game, I didn't care. It didn't bother me. If I was watching the game without knowing the outcome, seeing France score those goal would have made my heart explode! But knowing Argentina was going to win, I actually admired the goals that France had scored! Knowing that my team had won, made all the difference in the world in how happy I was watching that game.

Today, we remember and celebrate Christmas - the birth of Christ. The very real and true story of Mary, Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, and of course baby Jesus lying in the manger is well known to most of us by now. Concerning the birth of Christ, John writes in our Gospel lesson, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,"* (1:9). But what many people may not realize is how this story ends. It doesn't end with the arrival of the shepherds or the magi. The Christmas story doesn't even end at the cross or the empty tomb. The real ending of the Christmas story is the Second Coming of Christ, when all of those who have died in the faith will rise to eternal life. John writes, *"He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:11-13).

The Christmas story is the story of the Word made flesh, the birth of Jesus Christ, God's own beloved Son. But it is also our story, because Jesus was born to suffer and die for our sins. Paul says in II Corinthians 5:21, *"For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* His story is our story because by believing in Jesus, we are declared to be the righteous children of God. Therefore our sins are forgiven and when Jesus comes again in glory, we will have nothing short of the glory of Jesus Himself. The paradise of eternal life with Christ is how our story ends.

And that makes all of the difference in the world in how we live our lives. We already know the ending. Christ who was born, suffered, died, and rose again. He ascended into Heaven and promises to return. When He does, the dead will be raised, and we (despite what we may have done or what our lives are like now) will live forever with Christ. Paul knew that knowing this ending of our stories makes all the difference in how we live today when he wrote, *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"* (Romans 8:18).

As we remember the Christmas story today and hopefully every day that is to come, don't forget to remember how this story ends. It ends with us who believe in Jesus, being made the righteous children of God who will live in Christ's glory of eternal life. Sorry if that ruins the surprise for any of you, but I think we should all know this. Because knowing what awaits for us in the future, in eternity, encourages us to enjoy this life during the good times and persevere with hope in the bad. So, enjoy this Christmas Day. And have hope and peace wherever you may be, for you already know the ending. Amen.

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

