



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

January 22nd, 2023 A.D. – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

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 22)

I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.
For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.
All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
**before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself
alive.**
Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.

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 4:12-25)

Sermon – ✝ *Called* ✝ *(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

- Philip Hackbardt - recovered after tumor treatment
- Ken Cook - recovered after surgery

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

- Alice (friend of Brenda Heims)- cancer
- Jill (cousin of Karen Pfeffer) - awaiting transplant
- Kathy (sister of Mark Holt) - awaiting transplant
- Francis (friend of Pete Larson) - hospice care
- Doug Knutson - recovering after cataract surgery
- Carol Grimminger - recovering at Cottage Grove after surgery
- Ethel Dohrmann - cancer treatment
- Candi Engel - recovering at Heritage Care Center
- James Ball - health issues

- Bonnie Bubke - recovering at home after hospitalization
- Zimmerman family - recovering after car accident
- Lorena (sister of Brenda Heims) - recovering after surgery
- Don Hein - recovering after surgery
- Doug Knutson - recovering at home after surgery
- Dave Dohrmann - recovering after surgery
- Stephen Stepanek - brain cancer treatment
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Nadine Wax– at home

Mourning, friends and family of

- Marcia (relative of Brenda Heims) - died 12/29
- Norm Rutz - died 12/26
- John (brother of Donice McDonald) - died 12/26

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 and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; 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 and everlasting God, the consolation of the sorrowful and the strength of the weak, may the prayers of those who in any tribulation or distress cry to You graciously come before You, so that in all their necessities they may mark and receive Your manifold help and comfort; 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.



✠ *Called* ✠

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

In many ways our Gospel reading from Matthew this morning does not have much to do with any of us gathered here this morning. After all, in our text we read of the calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John. These four fishermen were going about their business, literally, when Jesus said, “Follow Me.” And they did. And in doing so they would go on to become not just four ordinary Christians, or followers of Christ, they would go on to become four of the twelve apostles. However, while the calling of the first four disciples has characteristics that are unique in light of their future as Christ’s apostles, there are also certain characteristics that make their calling shed light on the important truths of calling all Christians, including those of us today.

Like everyone else, except for Jesus, these fishermen were born sinners. Because of this, ever since they were born, they were unable to keep God’s commandments. And so, they were in a very literal way dying, and in fact already spiritually dead, and therefore unable to take any type of step to save themselves. You’ll notice that they did not see Jesus and decide to follow Him. Rather Jesus came and called them. He took the first step and called them to become his disciples. They would become apostles, but right here in Matthew they are being called to be believers.

Without Christ, we’re in the same dying and dead condition. We are born sinful and every day we sin in what we say, do, and think. And left by ourselves we go about the business of our lives, mending our nets, all the while perishing in our sin and unable to save ourselves. But through His Word and Sacraments, we see that we are not the only ones who are doing something. Through the Word and Baptism and Communion we see that Christ still acts today – still calls people by name to be His disciples.

So we can be sure that God loves us. He has called us. We don’t have to worry about coming to Jesus. He came to Peter and Andrew. He called James and John. And He has come and continues to come to us, not because we deserve it, but because God is merciful and He loves us. He wants us to follow Him and be His disciples.

Now, we might think that when these four in our Gospel lesson heard Jesus calling them they sat down and weighed out all of their options. That they calculated the risks vs. the rewards of following Jesus around. We might think that they understood what Jesus was all about and what it would mean to be His disciple.

Of course, if they knew all of this when Jesus called them, we would see that these disciples would never make any mistakes while they followed Jesus around. They would never be unable to drive out certain demons because they didn’t pray. They would never fall asleep when Jesus was praying. They wouldn’t want to stay on the mountain of Transfiguration and keep Jesus from going to the cross. They wouldn’t deny knowing Christ three times. They wouldn’t go into hiding after Jesus was crucified or be surprised when He rose. These men answered the call, so they must have known everything about God’s plan of salvation through Jesus Christ - right?

Of course this is wrong. One of the great stumbling blocks that people have today in answering Jesus’ call to follow Him is that that they don’t feel they can follow God when they don’t know everything about Him and the way He works. This usually isn’t something like God’s

Triune nature or what was God doing before He made the world. But things that hit a little closer to home. Many might follow Jesus if they knew why there are wars around the world and violence in our communities and schools. People wonder what God is up to when our faithful parents, children, or loved ones become sick and suffer with this or that disease. When we ourselves suffer. We may wonder why Jesus doesn't come back now and put an end to evil and suffering once and for all.

There are all sorts of questions that we have today about God and the way that He works. And so often these questions get in the way of following Jesus. But the disciples in our text this morning didn't have the answers to all of their questions. The Gospels record that they would ask them, and they would often end up getting all sorts of things wrong, even being slow in understanding the death and resurrection of their Savior. But nevertheless, being called by Jesus they immediately left their nets and their boats and followed Him. They didn't understand everything, they didn't know where they were going, but they followed Him with faith - trusting that God not only knew what He was doing, but that what He was doing was best for them.

And through that faith, Jesus would not answer all of their questions. He would not make their lives any easier. But He would take them to the cross, where they would see the Son of God lifted up to die for their sins and the sins of the world. Through their faith, God would bring them to Easter morning, where they would see God's victory over sin, death, and all evil.

Today, God doesn't answer all of our questions. He does not call us to understanding, but rather to faith. And following Jesus with faith and trust in our hearts we are taken to the cross. And there we see our Savior, God's Son, dying for all of our sins so that we might be forgiven and have eternal life. Following Jesus with faith we crouch down to look in the empty tomb and we too see that God has conquered evil and death and sickness and suffering.

Today Jesus is still calling us and all people to follow Him. It may not be to follow Him as an apostle and we may not know everything about this journey that we would like. But He calls us to follow Him by faith to the forgiveness and salvation that He freely gives. Amen.

