



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

February 5th, 2023 A.D.

The 5th 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 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 *Psalm 119*

Blessèd are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes!

How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

I have stored up your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

Blessèd are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes!

With my lips I declare

all the just decrees of your mouth.

In the way of your testimonies I delight

as much as in all riches.

I will meditate on your precepts

and fix my eyes on your ways.

I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

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

(*Matthew 5:13-20*)

¹³[Jesus said:] “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Sermon ✠ *Extraordinary* ✠ *(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

- Doug Knutson - recovering after surgeries

Entrusting into God's Care

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

Healing

- Deb Heitland– health issues
- Don (friend of Mary Vezina)- upcoming surgery on 2/6
- Kim Neuhaus– upcoming surgery on 2/9
- Pat Krekeler– health issues
- Ann (relative of Elaine Behrens)- recovering after 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
- Don Hein - recovering after surgery
- Dave Dohrmann - recovering after surgery
- Stephen Stepanek - brain cancer treatment
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Tom Stock– at home

Mourning, friends and family of

- Mike (brother-in-law of Rick Foreman)- died 2/1

- John (brother of Pat Krekeler)- died 1/27
- Helen (mother of Angela Sturtz)- died 1/19
- Neva (sister-in-law of Don Hein)- died 1/18

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

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; 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

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.



✠ *Extraordinary* ✠

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

Jesus said, “*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world*”. It’s not an option. It’s not a choice that you can make. If you follow Jesus, if you are a Christian, you have to be the salt and the light that makes the world a better place. You don’t have to be perfect. No one is perfect, except the One who fulfilled the law. But you, as a baptized disciple of Christ, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is not Democrats or Republicans or Libertarians or Independents that are the salt of the earth. Not Communists or Capitalists who are the light of the world. Jesus says it is not people who identify as any particular gender, or race, or ethnicity, or orientation that will make the world better. You might be one of these things, but it is you as a Christian, as one who has received God’s blessings through Jesus Christ, that makes you the salt and the light that you are.

The beginning of Matthew 5 finds Jesus sitting on the side of a mountain, teaching his disciples. He begins with what we now call “The Beatitudes” – giving them such teachings as “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” or “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*”. And it is right after these beatitudes, that Jesus tells His disciples about being the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Now I believe that most of us, even in these modern times when glowing screens are before us 24 hours a day, understand what Jesus means by saying His disciples are the light of the world. Darkness, as rare as it is these days, has always been and continues to be symbolically bad, representing fear and an evil world. But when light shines in the darkness, the darkness fades away. It’s destroyed. And Jesus’ followers are to be that light in the world.

A little trickier, but still pretty easy to understand is the idea of being the salt of the earth. Simply put, salt had many helpful uses in the ancient world. Besides making food taste better, it was used to preserve food, used in sacrifices, and could also be used as a form of currency. So, people thought it was a good thing to have salt around, just as the world should think that it is good to have Christians around as well.

But if the teaching to be salt and light is simple enough, then it gets a little tricky when we begin to think, “Just how exactly are we to be salt and light?” How are we, as Christians, to make the world a better place? Here, Dr. Jeff Gibbs correctly identifies a danger that modern day Christians, but especially Lutherans can fall into.

Before the Reformation, the Church had been teaching that monks and nuns, locked away in their cloister and convents, were living out better spiritual lives than people who had “ordinary” or secular jobs and vocations like a farmer or even a prince. But the Lutheran Reformers rightly rejected the notion that these monastic vocations held any kind of spiritual superiority over the “ordinary” callings of Christians. Martin Luther’s proverbial “milk maid” is just as pleasing to God in her calling as was any other Christian in theirs, be it the monk or even the pope. In Luther’s time, the crucial truth that had to be established was that people living out their “ordinary” vocations were being pleasing to God and in fact were the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

But the danger for us today, is to remember that Luther’s teaching does not mean that Christians are to live out their ordinary callings in ordinary ways. That is, they are not to live as

non-Christians as the rest of the world does. Jesus calls His disciples to be *extraordinary* milk maids and princes. *Remarkable* spouses, and parents and children. Neighbors, patients, or employees the likes of which the world has never seen! The disciple of Christ never looks at the world and says, “Well, everyone else is doing it, it must be all right”, or “I might as well join in on the fun” or “I’ll do likewise, lest I get left behind.” The disciple of Christ looks to Jesus, hears His voice and His teachings in the Word of God, and follows Him as they keep God’s commandments.

Of course, no one does this perfectly. Everyone sins and fails to live extraordinary or remarkably holy lives in the callings God has given us. I’m afraid that if we’re honest, far too often it seems that our sin actually makes things worse, not just in our own lives, but in the world around us. But this is why in our Gospel lesson, right after Jesus tells His disciples about being salt and light, He tells them that He has come to fulfill the Law. Jesus did not come to do away with all of God’s commandments so that it would be easier for us to be the salt and the light. Nor did Jesus come to repeat the teachings of God’s Law. Rather, Jesus’ Word tells us that He came to do what we could not and cannot do. He came to keep the law perfectly, so that when He died on the cross, it would be a sacrifice for our sins. He fulfilled the Law perfectly, so that with His death and resurrection our salvation would be complete. So that sinners would have perfect righteousness in His name.

If you have been saved by what Christ has done, than go out and be the salt and light He calls you to be. Because what makes the world a better place is not the works that Christians do per se, but rather the reason that we do them. What makes the world a better place is God’s love through Jesus. When Christians know that God loves them so much that He sent His Son to die for their forgiveness, that extraordinary love of God comes out when they are living their ordinary lives in whatever vocation they’re in. And when the world sees that love of God, through our works and our sharing of God’s Word, the world truly does become a better place.

Don’t think that it is just your works that makes you the salt of the earth or the light of the world. Rather it is God’s love through Jesus Christ that does that. But with faith in Him, you can live as His blessed disciples, no matter who you are or what you do, so that the world will see God’s love in you and be full of salt and full of light. Amen.

