



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

August 13, 2023 A.D.

11th Sunday after Pentecost

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.

Opening Psalm *Psalm 18:1-6*

I love you, O LORD, my strength.

² **The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,**
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised,
and I am saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death encompassed me;
the torrents of destruction assailed me;

⁵ the cords of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

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 14:22-33

²²Immediately [Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

²⁸And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”
²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Sermon – † *Saving Little Faith* † (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

Entrusting into God’s Care

- Michelle Hedtke - employment search
- Francis (friend of Larsons) - hospice care
- Those in nursing homes/care centers
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Donna Stranathan - recovering after surgery
- Natalia (friend of Karstens) - cancer
- Wendell (friend of Larsons) - health issues
- Cindy (friend of Larsons) - hospitalization
- Lucie (7-yr-old relative) - seizures, in drug induced coma
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at Cottage Grove after fall
- Prudy Petersen - recovering at home
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Tom Stock - health issues
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Rick Foreman - recovering at home after fall
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Del Block - The Gardens

Mourning, friends and family of

- Alta Dort (former Bethany member) - died 7/14
- Raymond (father of Lora Raymon) - died 7/11
- Obie (brother of Ben Mims) - died 7/4

Serving Our Country

- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - Army, deployed to Poland
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... Almighty and most merciful God, preserve us from all harm and danger that we, being ready in both body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish what You want done; 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, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that all our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day well pleasing to You; 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.



✠ *Saving Little Faith* ✠

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

Jesus walking on water is one of His better known miracles in the Bible that shows us His true identity and power as the Son of God. In fact, “walking on water” has become a sort of sarcastic euphemism in our society for someone’s perceived greatness. But more than just showing us Jesus’ identity and power, our text for today also highlights the disciples’ reaction to Jesus coming to them, and therefore highlights how we might respond to Jesus coming to us today.

Matthew 14:22 tells us that Jesus dismissed the crowd that had just been miraculously fed and made His disciples leave in a boat to go across the Sea of Galilee. Then He Himself went up on a nameless mountain to pray. When evening came, Jesus was still up on the mountain, while the disciples were having a difficult time out in the boat. We are told that they were “*stadios pollous*” from shore, a *stadion* being about 200 yards, and while there is no indication that their lives were in danger (many of them were experienced fishermen after all), Matthew does tell us that the waves were beating the boat because the “*wind was against them*”. So sometime between 3am and 6am, known as the “*fourth watch of the night*” to the Romans, Jesus came down from the mountain and went out to the disciples, walking on the water.

However, in the chaos of the Sea, and after a long day feeding the crowds and a longer night battling the wind and the waves, and to be sure, not really expecting to see what they were seeing – the disciples were not comforted or happy to see Jesus come to them walking across the water. Instead, Matthew tells us three things – the disciples were now “*terrified*”. They thought Jesus was a phantom, or some sort of ghostly spirit on the water. And now, seeing Jesus, they cried out in fear! You see it wasn’t enough for the disciples just to have Jesus in their presence. In the wrong situation, Jesus can cause fear and dread in people’s lives. It’s not right and it certainly isn’t what Jesus wants to do, but in this fallen world where people don’t always recognize our loving and gracious God for who He is, it happens. It happened out there on the Sea of Galilee and it can happen in our own lives as well. It happens every time that we lose sight of who God really is and then try to reimagine Him to our own liking. This is popular to do today, but when this happens the result is almost always fear and terror, because we end up with an image of god, or even Jesus as a vengeful god who will only judge us by the law. So, something else must happen or be present.

When Jesus saw that the disciples were terrified, when He knew that they didn’t know who He was, and when He heard them crying out in fear, “*Immediately*” He acted. Immediately, He spoke. Immediately He gave them His Word. And His Word perfectly addressed all three

reactions that the disciples were having at the time. Because they were terrified, He said, “*Take heart*” or “*Have courage!*” Because they didn’t know who He was, He tells them, “*Ego eimi* [Greek]”, that is He told them, “*It is I*”. And because they were crying out in fear, He told them, “*Do not be afraid*”.

Doesn’t Jesus do the same thing for us today? In the midst of all the chaos of this fallen world today; in the midst of viruses and uncertain futures; Jesus not only comes to us. He speaks to us in His Word. And there, in the Scriptures, His message is in essence the same as what He told the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. “Have courage, it is I – the God who doesn’t just judge, but the God who saves. The God who appeared to Moses and led His people out of Egypt (Exodus 3:14). The God who not only can walk on water, but tramples down the surging of mighty waters (Habbakuk 3:15). Therefore, there is no reason to fear Me or your future in this world.” While the presence of God may not be enough to comfort us, God has spoken to us through His Son (Hebrews 1:2) and His presence with His Word is always enough save us, calm our fears, and give us peace. Or at least it should be!

I say it should be, because apparently it was not enough for Peter. After hearing Jesus’ Words, what does he do? He asks Jesus for more! He comes up with this absurd request saying, “*Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.*” When Jesus tells Peter to come, he does go out to Jesus. But soon Peter became afraid again, not because he saw Jesus like before, but this time because he saw the wind. And so, Peter begins to sink and calls out to Jesus, “*Lord, save me!*” Of course, Jesus is the God who saves, so He immediately reaches out and takes Peter by the hand. Jesus saved the one who doubted and had “little faith”.

Dr. Jeffry Gibbs says that many today may ask: If Jesus is the powerful Lord over the sea, will He save *me* when *I* call upon Him? What if I have failed to believe in the promises that He has made to us in His Word? What if I find in myself only doubt when I should have faith that grows to become great, like a mustard seed. What if I am one with just a “little faith”? Will Jesus still save me, or will He, in all of His power over creation, let me sink into the depths of what we deserve?

Jesus walking on the water in Matthew 14 answers all of those questions. Jesus can save, has saved, and will save all who have even a little faith in Him – even if at times we too doubt. For all of the promises that He has made in His Word have already, or are in the process of, coming true. He has come to us humbly, ultimately dying on the cross to take our place under the judgement of God’s Law. But just as He promised, He has risen again, conquering death and letting all who have been baptized and believe share in that victory. These incredible things Jesus, the One who walks on water, has already done for us. And therefore, we can have a sure and confident hope in His promise to return, and restore this fallen creation back to Himself - back to the way it is supposed to be without sin or evil or anything that causes us fear or sadness.

Our response to this grace and mercy of God is simple. Matthew tells us that when the disciples had heard the Words of Jesus and when they had seen Peter be saved, they worshipped Jesus in the boat and said that He is the Son of God. May we always believe in the Word of God ourselves. And as you enjoy the salvation that God has given to you through Jesus and revealed to you in His Word, may we likewise join together to worship Him and confess who He truly is, the Son of God who is our Lord and Savior, who has come and continues to come so that He may comfort and save all who call in His name, even those who may doubt at times or have just a little faith. Amen.

