



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

November 12, 2023 A.D. 24th 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.

Psalm

(From Psalm 84)

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

How lovely is your dwelling place,

O LORD of hosts!

Behold our shield, O God;

look on the face of your anointed!

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O LORD of hosts,

blessèd is the one who trusts in you!

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 25:1-13

¹[Jesus said:] "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Sermon – † *The Big Day* † (*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

- Veterans that have served our country

Entrusting into God’s Care

- Dale & Bernice Stonewall - moving to VA on 11/14
- Darrel (father of Dawn Thomas) - hospice care
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Jenn (relative of Mary Nanke) - upcoming surgery 11/13
- Shirley Kellogg - recovering after broken hip
- Ellie (relative of Lynn Madsen) - cancer treatment
- Kelly Johnson - healing
- Jim (friend of Dave Johnson) - cancer treatment
- Bonnie Breiholz - recovering after surgery
- Joni Schmith - recovering after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery
- Rick Foreman - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Candi Engel - Heritage Care Center

Mourning, friends and family of

- Glennys Smith (sister of Betty Happel) - died 10/28
- Ron (brother of Ray McGraw) - died 10/13

Serving Our Country

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

Collect of the Day

Let us pray...Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son to lead home His bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; 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.



‡ ***The Big Day*** ‡

What do you do to get ready for the “Big Day”? Maybe that’s the first day of school, so you get some new clothes and new school supplies. Or maybe the “Big Day” is a first date, so you make sure there’s nothing stuck between your teeth. Maybe the “Big Day” is your wedding day! You know or can imagine all that has to be done these days to get ready for that Day! Maybe the big day is a move and so there are things to be packed and arrangements to be made both in the old and the new homes.

One of the Big Days in my life was when my son was born and boy, did I have to get ready for that day. This involved everything from an epic quest with my wife and mother to find a Radio Flyer wagon to pull our son around the neighborhood when he would be born - to hours and hours of classes to prepare for the possibility my son would be born on a deserted island with no medical facilities around. Thankfully, we made it to a hospital and all I had to do was stand in the corner and be quiet – but I was ready! I was ready for that “Big Day”.

But what if the Big Day is THEE Big Day – the Biblical Big Day. If we get ready for school and work and moving and weddings and the coming of new members into the family – are we ready for the Second Coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ? After Jesus ascended into Heaven, angels asked the disciples, “*Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go to heaven* (Acts 1:11). When a messenger from God says something is going to happen, be it the destruction of a sinful town or the birth of our Savior, you can sure that it is going to happen. So, we know that Christ is going to come back. The question is, when that Big Day happens, will you be ready? Jesus even says in our Scripture lesson today, “*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour*” (Matthew 5:13!).

To illustrate the importance of all this, Jesus tells us the Parable of the Ten Virgins. To be perfectly honest, we’re not really sure of all the traditions of a first century Jewish wedding. But here in the parable, ten virgins are waiting for the bridegroom to arrive. As sometimes happens at weddings even today, the bridegroom was running late. And so all ten virgins fell asleep. But when the bridegroom finally did arrive at midnight, only the five wise virgins were ready for this Big Day because they had brought extra oil with them for their lamps and were able to enter into the marriage feast. The five foolish virgin, even though they were able to go out and buy more oil, were left out of the feast, with the bridegroom saying that he didn’t even know them.

The bridegroom in this parable is, of course, Christ. And the marriage feast is the blessed, and eternal reign of God that will happen when He comes again in glory. And so while all

Christians are waiting for Christ to come again, what determines if we will be wise or foolish? What determines if we will be ready for the Big Day?

The prophet Amos gives us some insight to answer this question. Back in Amos' day, hundreds of years before Christ was born, things were going really well for the people of Israel. In fact, things were going so well that the people believed that God was especially pleased with them, regardless of all the sin they were committing. Sin like mistreating the poor and worshipping false gods. This misguided attitude that kept growing and growing because of their success and wealth led them to believe that when the final Big Day would come, God would be pleased with all them and all that they were doing.

But Amos crushes their delusions. He asks the people why on earth would they want the Day of the Lord to come because it is not going to be good for them! Amos 5:19 says this final Big Day will be, "*as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.*" The prophet tells the people what just when they think they are safe, just when they think they are ready, they'll receive a fatal bite from the evil serpent because they are not ready!

The people of Amos' day are not ready because they falsely worship God. God speaks through His prophet, "*Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream*" (5:23-24). The people simply did what they wanted to do and paid no attention to what God had commanded. They had neglected God's commandments and certainly did not follow Jesus' summary of the Law – to love God and to love their neighbor as themselves. As a result, their worship was useless, and when God would come to judge, they would find the Big Day to be a terrible Day. They will be left out of the marriage feast, the Kingdom of Heaven when Christ returns.

So, Christians today, and all of God's people throughout time, listen to God and follow His commands. They love God above all things and love all of the people in our lives as ourselves. Because no matter how well things are going for us now, we simply will not be able to escape God's anger and wrath if we go our own ways and neglect what He tells us to do.

The problem here however, is that all of us do exactly that, at least some of the time. We all sin in one way or another and fail to live up to God's standards. Does this mean that we're condemned as fools, locked outside of the Kingdom of Heaven? Not quite, because what separated the fools from the wise in Jesus' parable is if there was oil for the lamps when it counted. And what separates the lost from the saved when Jesus comes again, what separates those who will be in or out of the great heavenly banquet that will have no end, will simply be faith.

It is not our works, and certainly not the material things of this world that we do or do not have that saves us. Rather it is our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior from sin. Paul writes in Romans, "*For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law*" (Romans 3:28). Likewise in Galatians Paul says, "*yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified*" (Galatians 2:16).

Regardless of how foolish or wise we are or have been in the past; regardless of how many times we may have looked like the Israelites in Amos' time – mistreating others, trusting in our own wisdom and righteousness, and straying away from God – regardless of all that, when we have faith, we are saved. With faith in Christ as our Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil - He will know as at the eternal heavenly banquet. With faith, and faith alone, we will be ready of that last Big Day when Jesus returns. Amen.