



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

December 10, 2023 A.D. Second Sunday in Advent

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 80)

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!
Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
You brought a vine out of Egypt;
it took deep root and filled the land.
Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

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 Sermons tab and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Mark 1:1-8)

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

*"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,*

³the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

*'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"*

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and

were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Sermon – ✠ *Advent Preparation* ✠ (*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

- Shirley Kellogg - hospice care at Terrace Glen, Marion
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Carolyn Johnson - recovering after surgery
- Pat (mother of Karen Swanson) - recovering after falls
- Diane (relative of Brenda Heims) - health issues

- Rodney (relative of Betty Happel) - cancer
- Jan (friend of Joni Schmith) - complications from chemo
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering at Harmony after hospitalization
- Lee Heims - recovering after surgery
- Karl Hoech - recovering after surgery
- Del Block - recovering after hospitalization
- Kelly Johnson - healing
- Bonnie Breiholz - recovering after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Chuck Stoelting - Garnet Place

Mourning, friends and family of

- Loretta (relative of Barb Rocarek & Tyler Steggall) - died 12/4
- Denny (relative of Brenda Heims) - died 12/3
- Lee Roesti (former music director) - died 11/18
- Darrel (father of Dawn Thomas) - died 11/11

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... Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; 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.



✠ *Advent Preparation* ✠

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

By now, Christmas preparations are well underway. Decorations are up. Many of the treats that we all enjoy have been baked and exchanged. Christmas music has been heard and is being practiced. In fact, it seems that there is so much preparation for Christmas these days that by the time December 25th rolls around, many of us are ready for Christmas to be over with. This is how the world is these days - seemingly, celebrating the birth of a child before it is born. But in the church, while we celebrate and long for the Child to come again, we understand that we need preparations to take place. So, how do we prepare in the Season of Advent? Well, our Gospel Lesson this morning tells us how John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord in his day and how John's preparation for Jesus prepares us as well.

Mark begins his Gospel about 30 years after Jesus' birth and there highlights the work of John the Baptist. He is a man foretold by Isaiah and the last prophet of the Old Testament era. His meals of locusts and wild honey, along with his clothing of camel hair and a leather belt were not a the newest trendy diet or a fashion statement out of Jerusalem. These things reminded the people of Elijah, who was to come before the Messiah. This was needed, for it had been 400 years since a prophet appeared in Israel.

But more than just diet and clothing, John was known for his message. He told the people that the long awaited Messiah was coming. He told them now was the time to get ready. Now is the time to prepare. And where John gave this message was a fitting place to go along with it. For the wilderness pointed to what the Lord had done in the past, long before John shows up on the scene. It was here in the desert where God molded the people of Israel into a nation after they left the slavery of Egypt. The desert is a harsh environment by any account, where even the plants and animals can hurt or kill. This is a far cry from the paradise of Eden, and reminds people of just how far we have fallen because of sin. But it is there, in the wilderness, where God led His people Israel. There in the wilderness that Jesus went to begin His ministry after He is baptized. And there in the wilderness that John the Baptist began His somewhat odd prophetic ministry.

Yet John was far more than just an oddity in the desert to be ignored or a sideshow to be ridiculed. He was making preparation for a Great One to come. Jesus was the center and focus of this great prophet. After Jesus came and was baptized by John, John said, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30). John’s purpose was pure preparation for the One who was to follow. And John prepared for Jesus by pointing away from himself and instead, to Christ.

That works for us too. John prepares us for Jesus by turning us from our sins and instead, to Christ. Sin, after all, seems to always involve the turning in on oneself. A temptation for John certainly was to see those crowds, those longing to hear what he had to say, and think that this was all about him – his preaching and his life and his ministry. He was after all, the only one of his kind to have showed up for 400 years. With all of that going on it could be pretty tempting for John to make his ministry about himself.

We know about this temptation. We know about turning in ourselves. About letting Christmas become about “me, me, and me” instead of Christ. Whether it’s about the presents we get when we’re young or the ones we give when we’re older or how many activities attend or help out with at the church - the temptation is always to make these things about ourselves, and not the One who we are preparing for.

This really shouldn’t be surprising to any of us because we know that no one, by themselves, can properly prepare to meet Jesus – whether it’s in a manger in Bethlehem or at the font or altar here at Bethany. It is the Lord who calls and comes to us. No sinner can stand in the Lord’s presence by his or her own strength and character. It all depends on God’s grace.

Even repentance is a gift from God. Listening to John it’s easy to think that repentance is something that we do all by ourselves. To make it about us again. But hearing all of John’s message, we understand that along with turning from our sin, we need to be washed of our sin with the waters of baptism.

It’s like visiting a fine restaurant that requires a coat and tie – where a man won’t be seated and served unless he has both. Of course, many of these establishments will loan them to someone to save them the embarrassment of being denied service.

Now if a nice restaurant has standards such as this, how much more should the Lord of all creation need people to prepare for His coming. This preparation takes place in baptism, as those who are baptized are washed clean and coved with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Being baptized is preparation for the coming of Christ.

People from both Judea and Jerusalem came out to John. They were baptized in the Jordan, confessing their sin. And that meant turning from those sins to the One about whom John was proclaiming. Though they didn’t know His identity at that time, they were trusting that their sins would, nevertheless, be forgiven by the Messiah. And they were. And ours are. Because Jesus took them from His own baptism by John in the Jordan to the cross on Mt. Calvary. And that’s what turning to Christ means today. We trust that Jesus has taken care of all our sin on the cross – even the sin of selfish pride.

There are many preparations for Christmas regarding food, decorations, gifts and gatherings. But John reminds us in the midst of all of these preparations to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Most of us have been baptized into Christ. We have received the Holy Spirit, God’s forgiveness, and have even been led to repentance. We have been brought back from our life of sin and made members of His family and heirs of eternal life. Give thanks to God for these gifts and always remember them so that you will stay prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.