



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

September 8, 2024 A.D. 16th 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 28)

The LORD is the strength of his people;

he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me,

lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,

when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.

Blessèd be the LORD!

For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;

my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located at www.bethanycr.org/sermons and then continue with the Apostles' Creed.

Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Isaiah 35:4-7a)

⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Sermon

(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.

Bethany's Prayer List

Entrusting into God's Care

- Caregivers of those who are ill
- Mickie Sjullie - employment search
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Bennet (friend of Charles Clark) - leg injury
- Doni (relative of Sheryl Knutson) - upcoming surgery
- Arlene (relative of Sheryl Knutson) - healing
- Grant (grandson of Zenors) - recovering after accident
- Wilson (son of Luke Viertel) - recovering after surgery
- Deb Heitland - recovering after surgery
- John Hamm - recovering at St. Luke's Transition Center
- Elaine Cook - recovering at Cottage Grove after fall
- Faye Sieck - recovering after surgery
- Brenda Heims - health issues
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Duane Pfeffer - health issues
- Angela Yuza - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Carol Grimminger - Cottage Grove

Mourning, friends and family of

- Craig (relative of Missy Gingrich) - died 9/2
- Linda (relative of Bev Hoover) - died 8/11

Serving Our Country

- Devon (friend of Hedtkes & Chitticks) - deployed to Korea
- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (dght of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, stationed in Germany
- 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

O Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; 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.



Grace, Mercy, & Peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Joseph, the prince of all the sons of Jacob, was being held as a slave in Egypt. Many years later, the entire nation of God's chosen people, the Israelites, would be captives as slaves in Egypt as well. In the New Testament, God's apostle to the Gentiles – St. Paul – found himself shipwrecked and thrown into prison more than once.

Now all of us here know that troubles and hardships have a way of finding all of us. We know this because chances are they've found us in one form or another. But for some reason I'm always a little surprised when I hear about all the things that people like Joseph, the Israelites, and St. Paul had to go through. I guess it surprises me that these people, whom God would use to accomplish incredible things, would have to go through so much. In fact it almost seems as if those people, as well as many others in the Bible, and maybe even ourselves when the going gets rough, it almost seems as if God has left or abandoned them.

Think about the worst the day of your life. For many it could be a day when a member of your family or close friend died. Maybe it was a day when you knew your marriage was destroyed or a day you life was forever changed for the worse. Think about that day, and do you remember God being there? I hope you do, but I wouldn't be surprised as if it felt like God had left you. That He's not watching over you anymore, that He doesn't care! I wouldn't be surprised because I know this feeling myself, and Isaiah knew it as well.

Isaiah was one of the great prophets of Israel and inspired by God he told this great nation that they would be laid to waste. It would be as if God had left His people and let their enemies have their way with them. As you can imagine, those who knew that Isaiah spoke for the Almighty, would be terrified, much the same way that fear and uncertainty can overwhelm us when we're faced with trouble, or sickness, or uncertainty, or even death. But Isaiah, and God for that matter, doesn't leave Israel alone in its fear.

In the beginning of our Scripture lesson God tells Isaiah, "*Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.'*" Now Isaiah is a long book in the Bible, and so short little phrases are sometimes easy to miss. But go back to the beginning of our reading and think about what Isaiah said, "*fear not, Behold your God will come*". Of course it seems that in order for God to come, He has to be away. But Scripture tells us that God never leaves us, but there are times when it seems as if He has. And Isaiah knows this and God knows this. He tells Israel "be strong, your God will come."

Now God telling Israel, as well as us, to be strong when we are fearful is kind of a funny thing. It reminds me of when I would scrape my knee as a child and my parents would tell me to "be tough". Very often this advice didn't help too much, my knee would still hurt. When God tells those with fearful hearts to strong, we're often still afraid. But this is only because the world, and sadly even the church today, doesn't know how to be strong.

Just think of some of the things that people do today when they're overloaded with stress. There is something called "comfort food". Supposedly eating cakes and potato chips will bring peace to our hearts. Very often we believe that we need to "get away from it all" as if somehow putting physical distance between ourselves and our problems will make them go away. Or sometimes people turn to alcohol or drugs in an effort to escape, or cover the problems they face in life. But all of these things, and perhaps some others that you yourselves try at times, bring only temporary pleasure. They are what Martin Luther calls, "*fleshly comfort[s] which [do] nothing*

for the troubled conscience.” Instead Luther, as God Himself would, urges us to find our strength not in the flesh, but in God’s Word.

“...*your God will come...*” These words tell us that God is absent, but that He will come quickly to save us. They are a promise for the future, for God allows us to suffer a little bit right now, but His Word tells us He is coming. This can be hard for us to understand right now in the midst of suffering, and so God has given us His Word. His Word that not only promises that He is coming, but His Word that shows He already has.

In the Scriptures we see how God delivered Joseph out of slavery in Egypt and used him to save nations. In the Scriptures we hear how God heard the cries of the Israelite slaves in Egypt and sent to them Moses, who freed his people. In the Scriptures we see how St. Paul was rescued time after time so that he could continue spreading the Gospel. In our reading for today we see that when God will come the eyes of the blind will be opened, the deaf will hear, and the lame will leap like deer. Over 700 hundred year later after Isaiah wrote these words, Jesus stood in the Decapolis and said, “*Ephphatha!*” and a deaf man could hear. In the city of Jericho Jesus said, “*your faith has healed you*” and Bartimaeus received his sight. To a paralyzed man who was lowered through a rood on a mat Jesus said, “*get up, take your mat, and go home*” and the man walked.

No matter how far away God seems to be to us, no matter how afraid we might be – through God’s Word we can be strong. Strong because it not only shows us the promise that God will come, it shows us Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of that very promise. His name at birth, Immanuel - means “God with us”. And He truly is. He is the Savior of God’s people that Isaiah and all of the saints in the Old Testament were waiting for and now we have the privilege of knowing that He came. The advantage of seeing that God has kept His promise and the victory over our fears has already been won. We have this comfort, not from things of the flesh, not from the world, but from the Word of God.

It goes without saying therefore, that the Word should be of utmost importance in all of lives. Do not be like the man in the story I’m about to tell, a story told by William Cunningham. This man was walking in the desert when a voice said to him, “Put some stones in your pocket and tomorrow you’ll be both sorry and glad”. The man obeyed and the next day he found that the stones had all turned into rubies and diamonds. The man was overjoyed with his new treasure, but sad – that he hadn’t taken more. So it is with God’s Word. We rejoice with the comfort that it brings to us in the midst of our suffering, showing us our Savior, “God with Us”. We delight in the strength that it gives to us to find hope and peace in the middle of what can be a hard and terrible lives. Yet do any of us ever receive enough of it? This is like asking, can God ever be too close to us, too comforting? The answer is of course no. So take James’ advice and be quick to listen, but listen to God’s Word. For listening by listening to God’s Word, He has strengthened the heart of countless people who have been prisoners, slaves, and shipwrecked, and He will strengthen you as well. Amen.

