



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**December 8, 2024 A.D.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Luke 3 and Psalm 81)*

The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

**“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”**

Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!

**O Israel, if you would but listen to me!**

I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

**Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.**

But my people did not listen to my voice;

**Israel would not submit to me.**

Oh, that my people would listen to me,

**that Israel would walk in my ways!**

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## Scripture Lesson

*(Luke 3:1-14)*

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup>As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

*‘Prepare the way of the Lord,*

*make his paths straight.*

*<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,*

*and every mountain and hill shall be made low,*

*and the crooked shall become straight,*

*and the rough places shall become level ways,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

<sup>7</sup>He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” <sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

### Sermon

*(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

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### 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**

- Prudy Petersen - hospice care at Cottage Grove
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

#### **Healing**

- Ron Prescott - upcoming surgery 12/13
- Virginia (relative of Nancy Lee Siebenmann)- health issues
- Fred Henkelmann - hospitalization
- Kris Larson - recovering after hospitalization
- David (father of Chris Frampton) - recovering after surgery
- Jamie (daughter of Larsons) - health and wellbeing
- Paul LeFevere - recovering after hospitalization

- Phillip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Duane Pfeffer - recovering after surgery
- Dave Christian - cancer treatment
- Faye Sieck - recovering after hospitalization
- Elda Joyner - recovering at home after surgery
- John Hamm - recovering at assisted living in Waukee
- Angela Yuza - recovering after surgery
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Elaine Cook - recovering at home after fall
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

### **Homebound**

- Carol Grimminger - Cottage Grove

### **Mourning, friends and family of**

- Ken (brother of Karen Schmidt) - died 11/19
- Sandra (sister of Karen Hass) - died 11/17

### **Serving Our Country**

- 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**

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**

Almighty God, You gave Your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Himself. Grant that we, Your adopted children by grace, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord...

**Amen**

**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, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

In the liturgical service, after we hear the scripture readings, confess our faith together, and sing the Hymn of the Day – it is time for the sermon. The sermon is where someone, usually the pastor, tries to apply the Word of God to the lives of those who are listening. If the preacher is faithful to God’s Word, we may confidently say that God is using the person in the pulpit to speak to His people at that particular moment and time. Now of course, the preacher and the people listening are sinners, and sometimes get in the way of God’s message. However, this should not keep us from preaching and of course listening because despite of the obstacles of our sins, God in His infinite wisdom and mercy works through and around them.

God has been doing this for quite some time. There are numerous people in the Bible that God uses to preach His Word to His people. One of them we run into today in our Gospel lesson – John the Baptist. Of all the messengers born of women, Jesus Himself says there is none greater than John. And today in our Gospel lesson we have his message.

In the same way that there is a huge amount of preparation for Christmas Day to arrive, there was a lot of preparation for the arrival of the reason of the season. Jesus did not just show up one day as a child in Bethlehem. Promises were made by God, angels announced His conception and birth, and John the Baptist was sent to prepare the people of Israel for the ministry of Jesus. Luke, writing in his gospel, tells us that John did this preparation work around the year 26 AD. And exactly how does John say that one should prepare for the coming of the Lord? Well it seems that John was sent to shake things up a bit. I like to think that John was sent to get people out of their comfort zone. Luke says that John, “preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”.

John says later on in verse 16 that the baptism he would perform is different than the Christian baptism of the Holy Spirit that we know of today. But one thing that is in common between the two, is the idea of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Repentance is more than just a feeling of sorrow, it involves an actual change in a person’s attitude and behavior. It is a turning around of one’s life from the way of the Devil to the way of the Lord. This is what John wanted to see people do in preparation for the coming of their Savior and why he calls the crowd a “brood of vipers”! While perhaps they felt sorry, they needed to turn their lives around. They needed to produce fruit or actually do the good things that should go along with being sorry.

Keep in mind that producing fruit or good works does not save you. John assumes that those who came to hear him, already believed or had faith that God would send a savior into the world. Apparently, some thought the Christ might be John himself. But John is quick to point out that he is not the Messiah, and therefore they need to be ready for when He does come. They get ready by showing people their faith, through true repentance.

When confronted with their sins many people display some sense of remorse and may even say they are sorry. But far too often they have no desire whatsoever to change their behavior. And so how repentant can someone be who says their sorry, says they believe that Christ is their savior, but continue to happily go on sinning! John the Baptist would say you are not repentant! If you were, those around you would see some fruit being made.

This fact was not lost on the early church. Today when we bring new members into the congregation we usually make sure they “know” all of the things that we believe as Christians. In

the early church, confirmands, young and old alike, were examined in front of the congregation as well. But instead of questions like, “What are the differences between original and actual sin?” they were asked, “Do you feed the hungry? Did you clothe the poor, have you taken care of the widows?” In short, more than just knowledge, the early church followed John’s lead and expected believers to repent and change their behavior.

It seems that the crowd to whom John was preaching understood this, and understood that this is not an easy thing to do. They continue to ask John, “What should we do?” To the crowd he says if you have two tunics, give one to someone who doesn’t have one. He tells the tax collectors to be fair when they do their job. And he says the soldiers shouldn’t complain about their pay, nor lie, nor extort money. Now we may all sit here today and think that this doesn’t sound too bad. But for those who heard John’s words, the bar was set pretty high. To give someone your extra tunic was a big deal. These people didn’t have a closet full of them at home. They couldn’t order another one online. This could very well be half of what a person had! And the soldiers and the tax collectors? Their lives could be miserable, and so what little extra they could get by tipping the scales one way or another or forcing a little more out of someone who could afford it, was just part of the deal and to be expected. And now they weren’t supposed to do that?!?! With their extra tunics and extra money they were comfortable. Much the same way we tend to be comfortable in our sin. And so when they ask, what do we do now, John is telling them to, what I like say is, getting outside of your comfort zone.

When John is talking to the crowd he knows that it might hurt for them to get out of their comfort zone. It might hurt for them to truly repent and change their ways. But this is how one prepares for Jesus to give all of His blessings to us. As we hear this message to those who were awaiting Jesus’ first coming, let us hear it to ourselves as await His Second! What should we do as we wait for Christ to come again? What should we do, before we stand before the judge when we die. Repent, and get out of your comfort zone! It isn’t easy, but God does not want you to be comfortable in your sin. Because with true repentance, repentance that talks the talk and walks the walk, God can do what He came here for – to save those who put their trust in Him. Jesus didn’t come therefore only to save those who bear the fruit of repentance, but if you are saved by Jesus, that’s what exactly what you’ll do. So whether it is the crowd out in the wilderness listening to John, or Christians gathered in Iowa during Advent, if the question arises, “What should we do?” God tells us through John, get out of your comfort zone and repent, for your sins are forgiven through Christ Jesus. Amen.

