Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

August 3, 2025 A.D. 8th 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 49*)

Hear this, all peoples!
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
both low and high,
rich and poor together!
Truly no man can ransom another,
or give to God the price of his life,
for the ransom of their life is costly
and can never suffice.
This is the path of those who have foolish confidence;
yet after them people approve of their boasts.
Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
death shall be their shepherd.
But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,
for he will receive me.

Scripture Lesson (*Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26*)

[2]Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. . . .

[12]I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. [13]And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. [14]I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind…

[18]I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, [19]and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. [20]So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, [21]because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. [22]What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he

toils beneath the sun? [23]For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

[24]There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, [25]for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? [26]For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Sermon

May mercy, peace, and love multiply among you – in the name of the Father, and the T Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sometime ago, I heard a young woman say that her boyfriend was mad because he found out that she had a "past". Hearing this, I sort of laughed and thought to myself, "I have a past too, and a present!" Not in the way that this boyfriend was angry about, but who among us here today doesn't have a past and present that has seen more than its' fair share of sin in one way or another. And I'm not talking about other people's sin, but about our own disobedience towards God and hatred for those around us. St. Paul writes, "*…all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" We all somehow have a past and present.

The Preacher in Ecclesiastes, where we find our OT Lesson this morning, had a past as well. In verse 1:1 the Preacher is identified as "the Son of David, King in Jerusalem." In verse 12 of the same chapter, the Preacher says that he has been king over Israel in Jerusalem. Only David's son, Solomon, could fit this description, so we know that he is the "Preacher" who spoke these inspired words of God.

Solomon was David's heir, the last king of a united Israel. His wisdom was known throughout the world. He had unparalleled wealth and supreme power. God chose him to build the first temple, and he reigned during what had been called the "Golden Age of Israel". But as Solomon got older, he knew that he had a past. At one point he had 700 wives and 300 concubines, despite writing the biblical book Song of Songs that describes the blessings of a man and woman united in marriage. Despite the Lord delivering his enemies into his hands, Solomon would go on to trust in political alliances, rather than God for protection and power. At the end of his days, despite all of the blessings that God had given to him, Solomon knew that he had a past filled with sin and disobedience.

And as he draws ever closer to the grave, this man with all of his wealth, with all of his power, this man with his past writes, "*Vanity of vanities! All is vanity…*" Everything, apart from God is empty and meaningless. And he really does mean everything.

When my junior year of high school was coming to an end, we had a our last track and field practice of the year. As was custom on our team, at the last practice we voted for captains for the next year. And I remember the night before, how badly I wanted to be elected as a captain. It would validate three years of hard work. It would look good on college applications. But most importantly in my teenage mind, if I was elected captain - I would get to sew, or my mother would get to sew, a Captain's star on my letter jacket. And that was a really big deal. The next day, I was voted to be a captain of the track team for my senior year, and I wore my letter jacket to school, and to church, and to the movies, and all over town with that captain's star thinking this was really great. Today, I have no idea where that jacket is, as I left it in my parents' house when I went to college and my mother recently got rid of it. Something so important at one time, gets taken out to the garbage or recycled just a few years later.

Maybe it's not a letter jacket or a captain's star. Maybe it was video game that you had to have, only to play it for a few hours before you forgot about it. Maybe that new cell phone, that was so great when it was new, but now sits in a desk drawer, or has been recycled, or just thrown out. Or how about

cars. You save up, do all of the research, and are excited and proud when you take it home and park it for all the neighbors to see. You then take really good care of it, as it becomes a really big deal in your life – for awhile. But then, after a few years, even a new car becomes nothing in a world where we all have a past, and maybe a present too.

Now you might say, "Ah yes Pastor, but all of those things are material possessions. Surely the better thing in life like wisdom and hard work and family and honor are not vanity or emptiness.!" Solomon, would disagree. He says that he has seen everything under the sun in his wisdom and it is all vanity. He goes on in our text, "*I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool?*" This is where the idea of there are no luggage racks on hearses must have come from.

Even our nation, with dedicated leaders and defenders, is ultimately vanity apart from God. We certainly pay no disrespect to those who have sacrificed so much with honor and bravery. But certainly, the men who marched in Caesar's legions or rode in Alexander's cavalry were no less brave or honorable. Yet where is the glory of the Ancient Greek and Roman Empire's today? Do we think our country will be any different?

Because we live in a world where everyone has a past with sin, Solomon knew his empire would not. He looked around him as we do today and knew that all was vanity. Some of us may sit back and let life pass us by. Others may work to make our mark on the world. But all of us wind up in the grave, whether we take it stoically or fight it kicking and screaming. All that our human nature thinks is important is vanity.

With this dark and bleak picture of our condition, one might wonder what hope is there for the future? When all you have is a past, when all you have is sin, then everything you have in the present is vanity. But when you have God, when you have Christ, then even if you have a past, you're going to have a future – in fact, you already have it now. Because the future that God gives doesn't depend upon how holy we are or any good works that we may or may not do. It doesn't rely on how much stuff we've accumulated over the years or how much fun we've had, or who we hang out with. The future for us and the world lies with Christ, the Son of God!

It is in the water of baptism that God gives all of us with a past, a future filled with grace and mercy. It is in the bread and wine of Holy Communion that Christ gives a future filled with His love and peace. It is in His Word, that Christ comes to us and makes anything that we say and do in His name, have meaning and purpose into eternity. When we are with God, when we are rich with God out of the abundance of Christ's mercy, when we have been purchased and redeemed with the blood of Christ - our lives are never vain or empty, but full of God's love and mercy.

Solomon knew that he had a past filled with sin, so he turned to God for hope in the future. With our past and our present sins, it may seem that life in vanity as Solomon describes. So let us ever trust in Christ so that our past and present may be forgiven, and we too have a future of hope and peace with God. Amen.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation

came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,who with the Father and the Son together is worship ped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. 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
- Doug Knutson - recovered after hospitalization
- Wade Ramsey - recovered after hospitalization

Entrusting into God's Care
- Victims of flooding in Texas
- Pat (mother of Karen Swanson) - palliative care
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing
- Linda Patten – waiting for surgery
- Relative of Kim Neuhaus - health issues
- Cherie Miller - health issues
- Sue Kroemer - upcoming surgery 8/15
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Abi Clark - health issues
- Phyllis Landis - cancer treatment
- Rick Foreman - recovering at home after surgery
- Kelly Johnson - life issues

- Tom Larson - health issues
- Dave Christian - cancer treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound
- Cindy Broadwater - Harmony Care Center

Mourning, friends and family of
- David (brother of Karen Pfeffer) - died 7/26
- John (friend of Emily Kroemer) - died 7/17

Serving Our Country
- Hunter (relative of Hannah McGrath) - IA National Guard
- Eli (brother of Ashton Berberich) - Marines
- Aiden (grandson of Foremans) - US Army
- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (daughter of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, Germany
- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard

Collect of the Day

Let us pray…. O Lord, grant us wisdom to recognize the treasures You have stored up for us in heaven, that we may never despair but always rejoice and be thankful for the riches of Your grace; 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.