



2010 Summer Devotional

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

715 Minnetonka Mills Rd, Hopkins, MN 55343

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Engaged by God in a Living Faith: at Home, at Church and in the World

Dear Friends,

We hope that you will find adventure, relaxation and renewal during these precious summer months. This devotional booklet has been created as a point of connection between you and Gethsemane over the summer. Whether you use it beside the lake, in the midst of a family gathering, in the wilderness or as a devotional tool in your home you are bringing a piece of Gethsemane with you.

The texts and prayers that have been included will be used in our Sunday morning worship. The questions following the text are provided for personal reflection and contemplation. You can reflect on them after you have read the scripture or use them for discussion starters with someone you are with. The hymn words are listed for you, but you may wish to use your own hymnal for accompaniment or for singing in harmony. The prayers are listed simply as suggestions. Please add your own prayer concerns to those already listed.

Our prayer is that each of you has a safe and rewarding summer and that as you journey from home you feel uplifted and sustained by your church home. Please continue to share your joys, celebrations and needs with us even if you are away because you are an important part of our community and we want to stay informed.

Go with God!

JUNE 6, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Compassionate God, you have assured the human family of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Deliver us from the death of sin, and raise us to new life in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

PSALM 146

Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

²I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³Put not your trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there is no help.

⁴When they breathe their last, they return to earth,

and in that day their thoughts perish.

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,

whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;

who keeps promises forever;

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.

The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹The LORD cares for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow,

but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰The LORD shall reign forever,

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

- *How have you praised God throughout the week?*
- *One way God works to establish justice is by building communities of faith based on God's word. How is your community of faith sharing in this mission?*

LUKE 7:11–17

Jesus' ministry bears witness to God's coming reign, where the lowly are shown mercy and the dead are raised. Here, Jesus ministers to a widow by raising her only son to life.

Soon afterwards [Jesus] went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹²As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" ¹⁷This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

- *How have you observed God's miraculous work in the world?*
- *How do you glorify God?*
- *Look for an opportunity to share the Good News of God with someone in your life.*

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

Refrain:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee, how great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee, how great thou art! How great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander, I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

Refrain

Text: Carl G. Boberg, 1859-1940; tr. and adapt. Stuart K. Hine, 1899-1989
Music: Swedish folk tune; adapt. Stuart K. Hine

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

For the beauty of your creation...gifts of healing and forgiveness...the sustaining love of family
and friends...*Other thanksgivings may be added.*

For peace and international harmony...the earth and her resources...the Gethsemane congregation
...those who are sick or in need...those who are traveling...the church of Jesus Christ in every
land...*Other intercessions may be added.*

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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JUNE 13, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, throughout the ages you judge your people with mercy, and you inspire us to speak your truth. By your Spirit, anoint us for lives of faith and service, and bring all people into your forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

GALATIANS 2:15–21

Paul preaches on the power of God's grace to make us faithful. We are made right with God through Jesus Christ alone, through no work of our own. As a result, Christ's life has become our whole identity.

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. ¹⁷But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; ²⁰and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

LUKE 7:36 - 8:3

Through a dramatic encounter of rich and poor, righteous and sinner, Jesus teaches the relationship between receiving mercy and responding with a lavish outpouring of love. Jesus also provokes his host by claiming authority to forgive sins.

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." ⁴¹A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

^{8:1}Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ²as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

- *How do you feel knowing that God loves people who don't keep God's laws perfectly?*
- *What encouragement does such a love give to you?*
- *How can the church welcome people whose lives are messy?*
- *Who would be considered an outsider in our world today? How can we respond to their needs?*

Amazing grace! — how sweet the sound— that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4

Music: W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921, alt.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

For the beauty of your creation...gifts of healing and forgiveness...the sustaining love of family and friends...*Other thanksgivings may be added.*

For peace and international harmony...the earth and her resources...the Gethsemane congregation ...those who are sick or in need...those who are traveling...the church of Jesus Christ in every land...*Other intercessions may be added.*

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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JUNE 20, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

GALATIANS 3:23–29

For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people not only with God but with other believers. Those who call themselves children of God experience a transformation that removes prejudices of race, social class, or gender in favor of true unity in Christ.

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

- *How does the church live out the statement in 3:28?*
- *How can/do you live it out?*
- *What do you think it means to live as an heir of the promise?*

LUKE 8:26-39

Jesus' mission includes foreigners, and his authority extends to the casting out of demons. Some who witness Jesus' work are seized with confusion and fear, but the man who was healed is commissioned to give testimony of God's mercy and power.

Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me" — ²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

- *Pray for people that you know that are especially in need of Christ's healing touch at this time.*

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear now to his temple draw near, joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him! All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again. Gladly forever adore him!

Text: Joachim Neander, 1650-1680; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.
Music: *Erneuerten Gesangbuch*, Part II, Stralsund, 1665

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JUNE 27, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Sovereign God, ruler of all hearts, you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

GALATIANS 5:1,13-25

For Paul, the freedom Christ gives is not permission to do whatever we want. It is the invitation to be what we could not be otherwise. The power and guidance of Christ's Holy Spirit produce a different kind of life, one marked by the fruit of this Holy Spirit.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

- *What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?*
- *How does the spirit guide you?*
- *Pray to embody the fruits of the spirit.*

LUKE:9:51-62

Jesus is unwavering in his commitment to his mission in Jerusalem and will not be swayed by pettiness. In a series of striking cases in point, he calls his disciples to a similar single-mindedness.

When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

- *How do you follow Jesus?*

- *What holds you back from following?*
- *Offer a prayer asking for release of these things.*

HYMN

O Jesus, I Have Promised, St. 1, 4

ELW 810

O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; remain forever near me, my master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side, nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; oh, give me grace to follow, my master and my friend.

Text: John E. Bode, 1816-1874, alt.

Music: *Neuermehrtes Gesangbuch*, Meiningen, 1693

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JULY 4, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, you are the city that shelters us, the mother who comforts us. With your Spirit accompany us on our life's journey, that we may spread your peace in all the world, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PSALM 66:1-9

Be joyful in God, all you lands;
be joyful, all the earth.

²Sing the glory of God's name;
sing the glory of God's praise.

³Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!
Because of your great strength your enemies ¹ cringe before you.

⁴All the earth bows down before you,
sings to you, sings out your name."

⁵Come now and see the works of God,
how awesome are God's deeds toward all people.

⁶God turned the sea into dry land,
so that they went through the water on foot,
and there we rejoiced in God.

⁷Ruling forever in might, God keeps watch over the nations;
let no rebels exalt themselves.

⁸Bless our God, you peoples;
let the sound of praise be heard.

⁹Our God has kept us among the living
and has not allowed our feet to slip.

- *Make a joyful noise to God today.*
- *How do you offer praise to God?*
- *Where do you recognize God's awesome deeds in the world around you?*

LUKE 10:1-11, 16-20

Jesus commissions harvesters and laborers to go where he would go and do what he would do. Risking hardship and danger in exchange for the experience of great joy, they offer peace and healing as signs that the reign of God is near.

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

¹⁶"Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" ¹⁸He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

- *How does God send you out into the world?*
- *Do you feel prepared?*
- *How can pride get in the way of knowing God?*

HYMN

Blest Be the Tie that Binds, St. 1, 4

ELW 656

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the unity of heart and mind I like to that above.

From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free; and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.

Music: Johann G. Nägeli, 1773-1836, adapt.

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JULY 11, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, your mercy delights us, and the world longs for your loving care. Hear the cries of everyone in need, and turn our hearts to love our neighbors with the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

The letter to the Colossians was written to warn its readers of various false teachings. The first part of the letter is an expression of thanks for the faith, hope, and love that mark this community, including a prayer for strength and courage from Paul.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- *What does it mean to say that you have been "rescued...from the power of darkness and transferred...into the kingdom of God's beloved son?"*
- *How do you picture that kingdom?*

LUKE 10:25-37

Jesus is challenged to explain what is involved in obeying the greatest commandment. Jesus tells a parable rich in surprises: those expected to show pity display hard hearts while the lowly give and receive unexpected and lavish mercy.

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him,

"Go and do likewise."

- *Read this text through more than once, each time imagine yourself to be a different character.*
- *How does this deepen your understanding of the text?*

HYMN

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee, St. 1, 3

ELW 836

Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827, adapt.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

For the beauty of your creation...gifts of healing and forgiveness...the sustaining love of family and friends...*Other thanksgivings may be added.*

For peace and international harmony...the earth and her resources...the Gethsemane congregation...those who are sick or in need...those who are traveling...the church of Jesus Christ in every land...*Other intercessions may be added.*

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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JULY 18, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ, and you make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-28

Sometimes Paul preaches with great attention to theological concepts. Here, however, Paul offers a mystical teaching, that the great mystery of God is "Christ in you." Because Christ is present in the church, Christians share in his life, suffering, and glory.

[Christ Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

²¹And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— ²³provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

²⁴I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. ²⁵I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

- *How is Christ the image of the visible God?*
- *How else do you see/experience Christ?*

LUKE 10:38-42

Jesus uses his visit to two sisters as an occasion to remind disciples that an important aspect of obedience is single-minded devotion to Jesus and his word.

Now as [Jesus and his disciples] went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

- *Are you more like Mary or Martha?*
- *What things are not needed in your life?*
- *How do these things hold you back from experiencing God?*

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only the first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931
Music: Irish traditional

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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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.

BLESSING

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May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

JULY 25, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and ever-living God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and you gladly give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us your abundant mercy. Forgive us those things that weigh on our conscience, and give us those good things that come only through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 2:6-15

Paul warns his congregation in Colossae about "the empty lure" of philosophies and traditions that compromise faith. Through the gift of faith, the church is mystically connected with Christ in his death and resurrection, which is enacted in baptism.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

- *How do you live your life in Jesus Christ?*
- *What things take you captive and take your attention away from Jesus?*

LUKE 11:1-13

In teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus also reminds them to focus on God's coming reign, God's mercy, and the strengthening of the community. Jesus encourages his disciples to child-like trust and persistence in prayer.

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

⁵And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

- *Is it easy or hard to ask God for what you need? Why?*
- *Pray now; ask God for what you need.*

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer!
 Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear—
 all because we do not carry ev'rything to God in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge—take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820-1886

Music: Charles C. Converse, 1832-1918

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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BLESSING

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May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

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Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

AUGUST 1, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives. Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you, and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

HOSEA 11:1-11

Hosea compares God's love for Israel to the love parents have for their children. Whether teaching toddlers to walk or dealing with a child's rebellion, good parents continue to love their children as they try to lead them to life. In the same way, God's love will not let Israel go.

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ²The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols.

³Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.

⁵They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. ⁶The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests, and devours because of their schemes. ⁷My people are bent on turning away from me. To the Most High they call, but he does not raise them up at all.

⁸How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. ⁹I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

¹⁰They shall go after the LORD, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west.

¹¹They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.

- *This passage shares God remembering fondly how he felt for Israel. How does this tender message of God make you feel?*
- *Do you feel included in his desire for relationship?*

PSALM 107:1-9, 43

Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good,
for God's mercy endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the ¹LORD proclaim
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,

³gathering them in from the lands;
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

⁴Some wandered in desert wastes;
they found no path to a city where they might dwell.

⁵They were hungry and thirsty;
their spirits languished within them.

⁶Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD,
and you delivered them from their distress.

⁷You led them on a straight path

to go to a city where they might dwell.

⁸Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love
and your wonderful works for all people.

⁹For you satisfy the thirsty soul
and fill the hungry with good things.

⁴³Whoever is wise will ponder these things,
and consider well the LORD's steadfast love.

- *What do you hunger and thirst for?*
- *How can you relish in the steadfast love of the Lord today?*

HYMN

Take My Life, That I May Be, St. 1, 2

ELW 685

Take my life, that I may be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.

Music: William H. Havergal, 1793-1870

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

AUGUST 8, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your church. Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may be ready to receive you wherever you appear, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

ISAIAH 1:1,10-20

Isaiah announces God's displeasure with the offerings and sacrifices of a people who are without compassion. He urges them instead to do justice and defend the oppressed. Indeed, if they repent, the Lord promises, they will be made as clean as new-fallen snow.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.

¹²When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; ¹³bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation— I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. ¹⁴Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

¹⁸Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. ¹⁹If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- *Martin Luther encourages readers of Isaiah to read the book for themselves, instead of listening to it be talked about. He claims that Isaiah is "truly full of living, comforting, tender sayings for all poor consciences and miserable, disturbed hearts." As you read this passage today look for and contemplate on the living and comforting lines.*

LUKE 12:32-40

Jesus encourages disciples to invest their hearts and live fully into God's reign. Instead of facing life with fear, those who know God's generosity are always ready to receive from God and to give to others.

[Jesus said:] Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

- Take a few minutes to write down the treasures that you have in life. Offer thanks for these treasures.
- What stands in your way of being open to how Jesus Christ is coming into your life?

HYMN

My Faith Looks Up to Thee, St. 1, 2

ELW 759

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away, oh, let me from this day be wholly thine!

May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me, oh, may my love to thee pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887
Music: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

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AUGUST 15, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

GALATIANS 4:4-7

In the promise of the Incarnation, Jesus Christ embodies God's mother-father heart, in love claiming people as adopted children.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

- *Contemplate what it means to be a child of God and an heir of His kingdom.*
- *Is this something that you desire?*

LUKE 1:39-56

Mary's song, the Magnificat, serves as a thematic anthem for God's work in the world and therefore for the ministry of her son, Jesus. In Mary's praise we hear of a saving God who remembers the humble, scatters the proud, lifts up the lowly, and fulfills all things.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

- *Do you think that you would respond with as much excitement and joy if you were Mary? Why or why not?*
- *Have you been "full of the Holy Spirit?" When?*
- *How has Jesus, "shown strength with his arm; scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts, brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty?"*

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.

Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was the night.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2

Music: *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

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AUGUST 22, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, mighty and immortal, you know that as fragile creatures surrounded by great dangers, we cannot by ourselves stand upright. Give us strength of mind and body, so that even when we suffer because of human sin, we may rise victorious through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

JEREMIAH 1:4-10

The call of the prophet Jeremiah does not depend either on Jeremiah's abilities or his age. God will give him the words to speak. Even before Jeremiah was born, God appointed him a prophet to the nations, to minister in the difficult years before the Babylonian exile.

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." ⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

- *How does it feel to be known and loved by God before you were formed in the womb?*
- *Offer a prayer of gratitude for such commitment and love.*

HEBREWS 12:18-29

Using images of Moses from the Old Testament, the writer presents a striking vision of the new covenant of God made possible in Christ. There is no longer fear; only awe in the new promise in Christ into which we are invited.

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. ²⁰(For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death." ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear.") ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." ²⁷This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; ²⁹for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

- *God's love is so much more than something to see or feel. It is living. Make a list of ways and places that you experience God's living presence in your world.*
- *Offer a prayer of thanks for all of these ways that you know God.*

O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light, O balm for care and sadness, most beautiful, most bright:
on you the high and lowly, through ages joined in tune, sing, "Holy, holy, holy," to the great God triune.

New graces ever gaining from this our day of rest, we reach the rest remaining to spirits of the blest.
We sing to you our praises, O Father, Spirit, Son; the church its voice upraises to you, blest Three in One.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-1885, alt.

Music: German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

For the beauty of your creation...gifts of healing and forgiveness...the sustaining love of family
and friends...*Other thanksgivings may be added.*

For peace and international harmony...the earth and her resources...the Gethsemane congregation
...those who are sick or in need...those who are traveling...the church of Jesus Christ in every
land...*Other intercessions may be added.*

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.

BLESSING

Pray this blessing over those gathered or silently to yourself.

May the blessing of God warm you like the sun.

May the love of Christ wash over you like a gentle rain.

May the joy of the Spirit raise you to new heights like an eagle soaring.

Go forth, walk on the earth in peace.

AUGUST 29, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you resist those who are proud and give grace to those who are humble. Give us the humility of your Son, that we may embody the generosity of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

HEBREWS 13:1-8, 15-16

The conclusion of the letter to the Hebrews contains suggestions for the conduct of a holy life, all of which are shaped by God's love toward us in Jesus Christ.

Let mutual love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. ⁴Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." ⁶So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

¹⁵Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

LUKE 14:1, 7-14

Jesus observes guests jockeying for position at the table. He uses the opportunity to teach his hearers to choose humility rather than self-exaltation. Jesus also makes an appeal for hosts to mimic God's gracious hospitality to the poor and the broken.

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; ⁹and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- *Think of an opportunity that you have before you to be hospitable to someone in your midst.*
- *How can you share what you have today?*
- *How is our church at "inviting the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind?"*
- *What could we do better?*

All who hunger, gather gladly; holy manna is our bread.
 Come from wilderness and wand'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.
 You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food.
 Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers; seeker, be a welcome guest.
 Come from restlessness and roaming. Here in joy we keep the feast.
 We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood.
 Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993

Music: W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version

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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.

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SEPTEMBER 5, 2010

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PSALM 139:1-6, 13-18

LORD, you have searched me out;

O LORD, you have known me.

²You know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

³You trace my journeys and my resting-places
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.

⁵You encompass me, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

¹³For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

¹⁵My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written in your book;
my days were fashioned before they came to be.

¹⁷How deep I find your thoughts, O God!
How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

- *We are intentionally made by a God who loves us. How does this make you feel about yourself?*
- *How does this make you feel about others?*

LUKE 14:25-33

Jesus speaks frankly about the fearsome costs of discipleship. Those who follow him should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally mean renouncing all other allegiances.

²⁵Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus;] and he turned and said to them, ²⁶"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.

²⁷Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

- *How do you experience this difficult passage?*
- *What things in your life stand in the way of you following Jesus?*

HYMN

Lift High the Cross, St. 1, 3

ELW 660

Refrain:

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod, our king victorious, Christ, the son of God. *Refrain*

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree, as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. *Refrain*

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827-1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874-1956

Music: Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875-1947

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