

BREAD FOR THE DAY

DAILY BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYERS

2024



AUGSBURG FORTRESS

Minneapolis



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Introduction

Daily prayer is an essential practice for those who seek to hear God's voice and cultivate an inner life. Whether you pray alone or with others, with brevity or in sustained meditation, the rhythm of daily prayer reveals the life-sustaining communion to which God invites all human beings. Such prayer is a serene power silently at work, drawing us into the ancient yet vital sources of faith, hope, and love.

The guiding principle of the selection of daily readings in *Bread for the Day* is their relationship to the Sunday readings as presented in the Revised Common Lectionary (a system of readings in widespread use across denominations). The readings are chosen so that the days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the Sunday readings. The days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect on the Sunday readings.

How this book is organized

- Each day's page is dated and named in relationship to the church's year. Lesser festivals are listed along with the date as part of the day heading. Commemorations are listed just below in smaller type. Notes on those commemorated can be found on pages 408–416.
- Several verses of one of the appointed scripture texts are printed. The full text citation is provided for those who would like to reflect on the entire text. In addition, two or three additional reading citations with short descriptions are provided.
- Two psalms are appointed for each week: one psalm for Monday through Wednesday and a second psalm for Thursday through Saturday. In this way the days leading up to Sunday or flowing

out from Sunday have a distinct relationship with one another in addition to their relationship with the Sunday readings.

- Following the scripture text is a hymn suggestion from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) or *All Creation Sings* (ACS) and a prayer that incorporates a theme from one or more readings.
- Household prayers and blessings appropriate to the changing seasons are placed throughout the book. Simplified forms of morning and evening prayer, morning and evening blessings, and prayers with children can be found on pages 424–431.

How to use this book

- Use the weekday readings to prepare for and reflect on the Sunday readings.
- Use the questions printed on page 432 to guide your reflection on the scripture texts.
- Use the resources for household prayer placed throughout the book. See the Contents on pages 3–4 for a complete list.
- Record prayer requests on the first page for each month.
- In addition to being used to guide individual prayer, this book may be used to guide family prayer, prayer in congregational or other settings during the week, prayer with those who are sick or homebound, or prayer with other groups.

Even though Christians gather on the Lord's day, Sunday, for public worship, much of our time is spent in the home. We first learn the words, gestures, and songs of faith in the home. We discover our essential identity as a community of faith and mark significant transitions of life in the home. To surround and infuse the daily rhythm of sleeping and waking, working, resting, and eating with the words and gestures of Christian prayer is to discover the ancient truth of the gospel: the ordinary and the human can reveal the mystery of God and divine grace. Like planets around the sun, our daily prayer draws us to the Sunday assembly where we gather for the word and the breaking of the bread in the changing seasons of the year. From the Sunday assembly, our daily prayer flows into the week.

Monday, January 1, 2024

Name of Jesus



Numbers 6:22-27

The Aaronic blessing

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them,

The LORD bless you and keep you;

the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.

(Num. 6:22-27)

Psalm

Psalm 8

How exalted is your name

Additional Readings

Galatians 4:4-7

We are no longer enslaved

Luke 2:15-21

The child is named Jesus

Hymn: When a Star Is Shining, ACS 915

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Ninth Day of Christmas

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Psalm 148

God's splendor is over earth and heaven

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;
fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike
old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

(Ps. 148:7-13)

Additional Readings

Proverbs 1:1-7

Grow in wisdom and knowledge

James 3:13-18

The wisdom from above

Hymn: God of the Sparrow, ELW 740

O creator of the universe, you invite us to join the choir of creation, singing to the glory of your name. Inspire us to delight in your heavenly music come to earth as we sing with the saints and angels forever.

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Tenth Day of Christmas

Proverbs 1:20-33

Give heed to Wisdom, live without dread

Wisdom cries out in the street;

in the squares she raises her voice.

At the busiest corner she cries out;

at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

“How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?

How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing

and fools hate knowledge?

Give heed to my reproof;

I will pour out my thoughts to you;

I will make my words known to you.” (Prov. 1:20-23)

Psalm

Psalm 110

Prayers for the king

Additional Reading

James 4:1-10

Humble yourselves before God

Hymn: Beloved, God’s Chosen, ELW 648

O Wise One, whose thoughts are beyond our comprehension and whose ways are beyond our attainment, grant that during these days of Christmas, we may behold your wisdom come down to earth in the poverty and perfect love of the babe of Bethlehem.

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Eleventh Day of Christmas

Psalm 110

Prayers for the king

The LORD says to my lord,
“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The LORD sends out from Zion
your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your foes.

Your people will offer themselves willingly
on the day you lead your forces
on the holy mountains.

From the womb of the morning,
like dew, your youth will come to you.

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

(Ps. 110:1-4)

Additional Readings

Proverbs 3:1-12

Trust in God with all your heart

James 4:11-17

Our plans for our time are in God's hands

Hymn: O Beauty Ever Ancient, ACS 1100

O Lord, whose might is shown in the gentleness of the manger of Bethlehem, bless us during these Christmas days as we discover your power through weakness, your love amidst simplicity, and your greatest gift in the Christ child.

Friday, January 5, 2024

Twelfth Day of Christmas

Luke 6:27-31

Do to others as you would have them do to you

[Jesus said to his disciples,] “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:27-31)

Psalm

Psalm 110

Prayers for the king

Additional Reading

Proverbs 22:1-9

The generous are blessed

Hymn: Take My Life, That I May Be, ELW 583/685

O God of unimaginable love, who dared become vulnerable to save the world, teach us a far better way. Grant that we may love those who hate us and treat others as we wish to be treated, so that in some way today, our neighbors might hear the voice of Christ through us.



Blessing for a Home at Epiphany

Matthew writes that when the magi saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. “On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother” (Matt. 2:10-11). In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action.

Twelfth Night (January 5) or Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6) offers an occasion for gathering with friends and family members for a blessing for the home. Someone may lead the greeting and blessing, while another person may read the scripture passage. Following an eastern European tradition, a visual blessing may be inscribed with white chalk above the main door: 20 + CMB + 24. The numbers change with each new year. The three letters stand for either the ancient Latin blessing *Christe mansionem benedicat*, which means “Christ, bless this house,” or the legendary names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar).

Greeting

Peace to this house and to all who enter here.

By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is established;
through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures. (*Prov. 24:3-4*)

Reading

As we prepare to ask God’s blessing on this household,
let us listen to the words of scripture.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.
From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
(John 1:1-4, 14, 16)

Inscription

This inscription may be made with chalk above the entrance:

20 † C M B † 24

Write the appropriate character (left) while speaking the text (right).

The magi of old, known as

C Caspar,

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar

followed the star of God's Son who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

24 and twenty-four years ago.

† Christ, bless this house,

† and remain with us throughout the new year.

Prayer of Blessing

O God,

you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star.

We pray that you bless this home and all who live here
with your gracious presence.

May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide,
your truth our light, and your peace our benediction;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Then everyone may walk from room to room, blessing the house with incense or by
sprinkling with water, perhaps using a branch from the Christmas tree.*