



# BREAD FOR THE DAY

DAILY BIBLE READINGS  
AND PRAYERS

2016





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## FOREWORD

Beloved of God,

For generations, the living word has sustained God's people. In times of prosperity and turmoil, joy and sorrow, the church has found hope and consolation in scripture.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has embraced the initiative called Book of Faith. In it we have committed ourselves to deepening our fluency in the first language of faith, holy scripture. *Bread for the Day* is a wonderful resource for your daily encounter with the word. You will be nourished, encouraged, and sustained, as have the saints before you.

As the Conference of Bishops, we invite you to join us, and this whole church, in persistent attentiveness to the word. Your faith will be deepened, your witness empowered, and your church enriched. God bless your journey in faith.

Conference of Bishops  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

For more about Book of Faith, visit [www.bookoffaith.org](http://www.bookoffaith.org).



## 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 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 upon 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 410–418.
- 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 printed scripture text is a hymn suggestion from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and a prayer that incorporates a theme present in one or more of the readings.
- Household prayers and blessings appropriate to the changing seasons are placed throughout the book. Simplified forms of morning and evening prayer, waking prayers, and bedtime prayers, including 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.
- Use the page at the beginning of each month to record prayer requests.
- In addition to being used to guide individual prayer, this book may also be used to guide family prayer, prayer in congregational or other settings during the week, prayer with those who are sick or homebound, or 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.

## PRAYER LIST FOR JANUARY

[illegible]



## Blessing for the New Year

O God,  
you have been our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come.  
As we welcome this new year,  
bless us with peace.  
Fill our days with the light of Christ  
and lead us on the path of life  
until we see you in our heavenly home.  
You live and reign forever and ever.  
Amen.



# Friday, January 1, 2016

## Name of Jesus

### Luke 2:15-21

*The child is named Jesus*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:15-21)

### Psalm

Psalm 8

*How exalted is your name*

### Additional Readings

Numbers 6:22-27

*The Aaronic blessing*

Galatians 4:4-7

*We are no longer slaves*

**Hymn:** All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name! ELW 634

*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.*

# Saturday, January 2, 2016

## Week of Christmas I

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

### Proverbs 1:1-7

*Grow in wisdom and knowledge*

Let the wise also hear and gain in learning,  
and the discerning acquire skill,  
to understand a proverb and a figure,  
the words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;  
fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov. 1:5-7)

### Psalm

Psalm 147:12-20

*Praising God in Zion*

### Additional Reading

James 3:13-18

*The wisdom from above*

**Hymn:** We Eat the Bread of Teaching, ELW 518

*God of wisdom, you are the source of all knowledge and goodness.  
Breathe your Spirit into our hearts and minds. Fill us with insight,  
creativity, and compassion, and equip us to grow in understanding and  
service to others.*



# Sunday, January 3, 2016

## Second Sunday of Christmas

**John 1:[1-9] 10-18**

*God with us*

And 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. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me'.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. (John 1:14-18)

### **Psalm**

**Psalm 147:12-20**

*Praising God in Zion*

### **Additional Readings**

**Jeremiah 31:7-14**

*Joy as God's scattered flock  
gathers*

**Ephesians 1:3-14**

*The will of God made  
known in Christ*

**Hymn: Let All Together Praise Our God, ELW 287**

*Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

# Monday, January 4, 2016

## Week of Christmas 2

### Isaiah 6:1-5

*The Lord high and lofty*

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” (Isa. 6:1-5)

### Psalm

Psalm 72

*Prayers for the king*

### Additional Reading

Acts 7:44-53

*Solomon's temple cannot contain God*

### Hymn: The Bells of Christmas, ELW 298

*God of holiness and might, you are enthroned in heavenly glory, yet near to human hearts. Give us vision to recognize your presence among us. Open our hearts to receive your mercy and strengthen us to do your will.*

# Tuesday, January 5, 2016

## Week of Christmas 2

### Jeremiah 31:7-14

*Joy as God's scattered flock gathers*

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."  
For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.  
They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again. (Jer. 31:10-12)

### Psalm

Psalm 72

*Prayers for the king*

### Additional Reading

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

*God with us*

**Hymn:** The First Noel, ELW 300

*God of all nations, like a shepherd you gather your people from near and far. Draw all people into your loving embrace. Watch over us with your tender care and fill us with compassion and joy.*

## 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. In the home, Christ is welcome.

Twelfth Night (January 5), Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6), or another day during the time after Epiphany 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; for example, 20 + CMB + 16. 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).

### Gathering

May peace be 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. (*Proverbs 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 + 16

*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

16 and sixteen 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.*

# Wednesday, January 6, 2016

## Epiphany of Our Lord



### Matthew 2:1-12

*Christ revealed to the nations*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet.” (Matt. 2:1-5)

### Psalm

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

*All shall bow down*

### Additional Readings

Isaiah 60:1-6

*Nations come to the light*

Ephesians 3:1-12

*The gospel's promise for all*

**Hymn:** O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright! ELW 308

*O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*



## TIME AFTER EPIPHANY



On the Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6), the household joins the church throughout the world in celebrating the manifestation, the “epiphany,” of Christ to the world. The festival of Christmas is thus set within the context of outreach to the larger community; it possesses an outward movement. The festival of the Epiphany asks the Christian household: How might our faith in Christ the Light be shared with friends and family, with our neighbors, with the poor and needy in our land, with those who live in other nations?

### **Table Prayer for Epiphany and the Time after Epiphany (January 6–February 9)**

Generous God,  
you have made yourself known in Jesus, the light of the world.  
As this food and drink give us refreshment,  
so strengthen us by your Spirit,  
that as your baptized sons and daughters  
we may share your light with all the world.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.