



**A PRAYER
SERVICE
FOR**

Life

The following service has been prepared by LCMS Worship and LCMS Life Ministry and made available through Concordia Publishing House. This service will be prayed at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, Mo., on Nov. 30, 2021. Local congregations are invited to also use this bulletin when holding services as their schedule may suggest.

About This Service

Christians address their sorrows and complaints to God in lament. He, not the world around us, is the audience of our prayer. In the face of love grown cold (MATTHEW 25:12), we do not imagine ourselves a match for sin, death and the devil. We ask the Lord for everything (JOHN 16:24).

For these reasons, this service features multiple psalms of lament concerning the enemies of life (PSALM 10), the Lord's own rebuke of proud rulers (PSALM 82), and our confidence in the Lord's care, recognizing that judgment and repentance must begin at the house of God (PSALM 139).

It also features the Litany, a prayer with a simple, persistent petition for every situation: "Kyrie Eleison! Lord, have mercy!" It is arranged here for the greatest congregational participation, as a desperate supplication to God — despairing of all helpers except God in Christ Jesus.

The Scriptures have been chosen to give opportunity, where possible, for a sermon that teaches about the Fifth Commandment and God's concern for all human life, for which Christ has shed His atoning blood.

The hymns sing in harmony with these Scriptures and prayers, asking God for clear consciences and noble voices, finding refuge in Christ alone from death and every evil, and confessing that Christ has redeemed the world and desires that all come to the knowledge of this truth — those in high places, those far off and those yet to be born.

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Acknowledgments

Vespers from *Lutheran Service Book*

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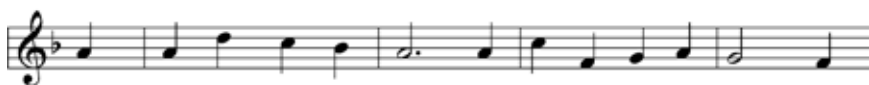
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Hymn

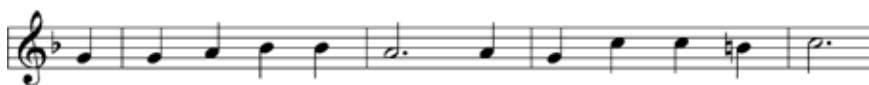
“O God, My Faithful God” LSB 696



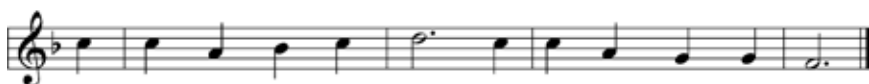
1 O God, my faith - ful God, True foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,
2 Grant me the strength to do With read - y heart and will - ing
3 Keep me from say - ing words That lat - er need re - call - ing;
4 Lord, let me win my foes With kind - ly words and ac - tions,



With - out whom noth - ing is, All per - fect gifts be - stow - ing:
What - ev - er You com-mand, My call - ing here ful - fill - ing;
Guard me lest i - dle speech May from my lips be fall - ing;
And let me find good friends For coun-sel and cor - rec - tion.



Give me a health - y frame, And may I have with - in
That I do what I should While trust - ing You to bless
But when with - in my place I must and ought to speak,
Help me, as You have taught, To love both great and small



A con-science free from blame, A soul un - stained by sin.
The out - come for my good, For You must give suc - cess.
Then to my words give grace Lest I of - fend the weak.
And by Your Spir - it's might To live in peace with all.

- 5 Let me depart this life
 Confiding in my Savior;
By grace receive my soul
 That it may live forever;
And let my body have
 A quiet resting place
Within a Christian grave;
 And let it sleep in peace.
- 6 And on that final day
 When all the dead are waking,
Stretch out Your mighty hand,
 My deathly slumber breaking.
Then let me hear Your voice,
 Redeem this earthly frame,
And bid me to rejoice
 With those who love Your name.

THE ORDER OF VESPERS



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



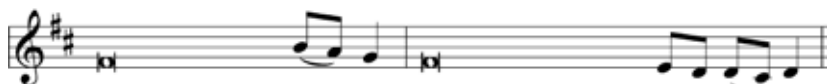
L Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



C make haste to help me, O Lord.



C Glo-ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.



Praise to You, O Christ. Al - le - lu - ia.

Sit

Why, O LORD, do you stand a- | far off?*

Why do you hide yourself in times of | trouble?

L For the wicked boasts of the desires | of his soul,*
and the one greedy for gain curses and renounc- | es the LORD.

L His ways prosper at all times;
your judgments are on high, out | of his sight;*
as for all his foes, he | puffs at them.

[L] His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression,*
under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

L he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
 he lurks that he may | seize the poor;*
 he seizes the poor when he draws him in- | to his net.

4

- L** He says in his heart, “God has for- | gotten,*
he has hidden his face, he will never | see it.”
- C** Arise, O LORD; O God, lift | up your hand;*
forget not the af- | flicted.
- L** Why does the wicked renounce God
and say | in his heart,*
“You will not call | to account”?
- C** But you do see, for you note mischief and vex- | ation,*
that you may take it in- | to your hands;
- L** to you the helpless com- | mits himself;*
you have been the helper of the | fatherless.
- C** Break the arm of the wicked and evil- | doer;*
call his wickedness to account till you | find none.
- L** The LORD is king forever and | ever;*
the nations perish | from his land.
- C** O LORD, you hear the desire of the af- | flicted;*
you will strength- | en their heart;
- L** you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless
and | the oppressed,*
so that man who is of the earth may strike ter- | ror no more.
- C** Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
- L** Arise, O LORD; O God, lift | up your hand;*
forget not the af- | flicted.

God has taken his place in the divine | council;^{*}
in the midst of the gods he holds | judgment:

L Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;^{*}
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

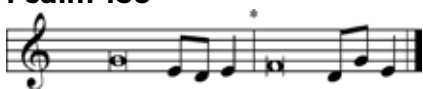
L They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in | darkness;^{*}
all the foundations of the earth are | shaken.

L nevertheless, like men | you shall die,*
and fall like | any prince.”

C Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

6

Psalm 139



- L** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonder- | fully made.*
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it | very well.
- C** My frame was not hid- | den from you,*
when I was being made in secret, intricately woven
in the depths | of the earth.
- L** Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every | one of them,*
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there were | none of them.
- C** How precious to me are your thoughts, | O God!*
How vast is the | sum of them!
- L** If I would count them, they are more | than the sand.*
I awake, and I am still | with you.
- C** Oh that you would slay the wicked, | O God!*
O men of blood, de- | part from me!
- L** They speak against you with mali- | cious intent;*
your enemies take your | name in vain!
- C** Do I not hate those who hate you, | O LORD?*
And do I not loathe those who rise up a- | gainst you?
- L** I hate them with complete | hatred;*
I count them my | enemies.
- C** Search me, O God, and | know my heart!*
Try me and | know my thoughts!
- L** And see if there be any grievous | way in me,*
and lead me in the way ever- | lasting!
- C** Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
- L** You knitted me together in my | mother's womb.*
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonder- | fully made.

Hymn

"In the Very Midst of Life" LSB 755



1 In the ver - y midst of life Snares of death sur - round us;
2 In the midst of death's dark vale Pow'rs of hell o'er - take us.
3 In the midst of ut - ter woe When our sins op - press us,



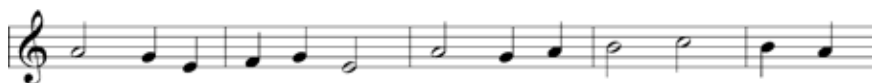
Who shall help us in the strife Lest the foe con - found us?
Who will help when they as - sail, Who se - cure will make us?
Where shall we for ref - uge go, Where for grace to bless us?



Thou on - ly, Lord, Thou on - ly! We mourn that we have great - ly
Thou on - ly, Lord, Thou on - ly! Thy heart is moved with ten - der -
To Thee, Lord Je - sus, on - ly! Thy pre - cious blood was shed to



erred, That our sins Thy wrath have stirred. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!
ness, Pit - ies us in our dis - tress. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!
win Full a - tone - ment for our sin. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!



Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful
Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful
Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful



Sav - ior! E - ter - nal Lord God! Save us lest we per - ish
Sav - ior! E - ter - nal Lord God! Save us from the ter - ror
Sav - ior! E - ter - nal Lord God! Lord, pre - serve and keep us



In the bit - ter pangs of death. Have mer - cy, O Lord!
Of the fi - ery pit of hell. Have mer - cy, O Lord!
In the peace that faith can give. Have mer - cy, O Lord!

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Readings

Genesis 9:1–7

- L** A reading from Genesis, chapter 9.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.

And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it.”

- L** O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Luke 6:39–45

- L** A reading from Luke, chapter 6.

He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.
C Thanks be to God.

Verse *To Refrain*

The musical notation shows a single melodic line on a five-line staff with a treble clef and two sharps (F# and C#). The key signature is D major. The time signature is common time (C). The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. A bracket under the first three measures indicates the verse, and a bracket under the last two measures indicates the refrain.

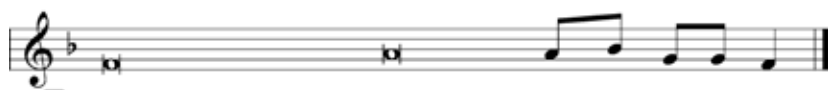
[L] 1 Teach me Your way, O Lord, that I may walk in Your truth.
2 Unite my heart to fear Your name that I may walk in Your truth.
3 Glory be to the
Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it.

Sermon

Stand



I Let my prayer rise before You as in - cense,

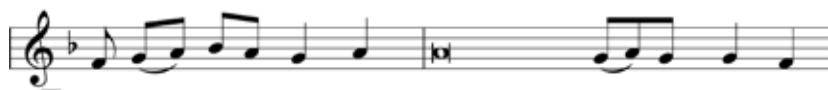


C and the lifting up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

Magnificat



C My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Sav-ior;



I for He has re-gard - ed the lowliness of His hand-maid - en.



II For be-hold, from this day all generations will call me bless - ed.



I For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;



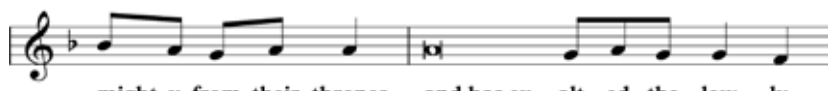
II and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to gen - er - a - tion.



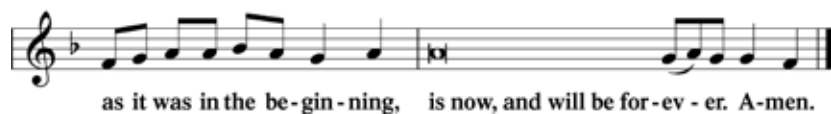
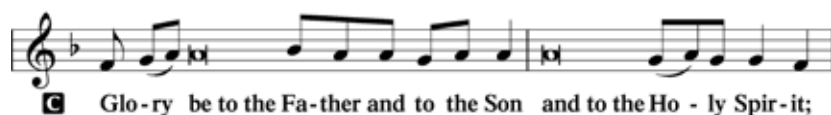
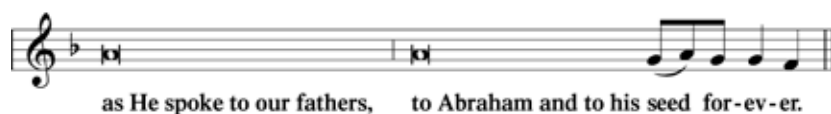
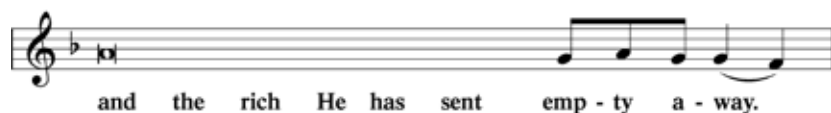
I He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the



imagination of their hearts. **II** He has cast down the



might-y from their thrones and has ex - alt - ed the low - ly.



Kneel/Stand

Litany

L O Lord,
C have mercy.

L O Christ,
C have mercy.

L O Lord,
C have mercy.

L O Christ,
C hear us.

L God the Father in heaven,
C have mercy.

L God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C have mercy.

L God the Holy Spirit,
C have mercy.

L Be gracious to us.
C Spare us, good Lord.

L Be gracious to us.
C Help us, good Lord.

L From all sin, from all error, from all evil;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From the crafts and assaults of the devil;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From sudden and evil death;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From pestilence and famine;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From war and bloodshed;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From sedition and from rebellion;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From lightning and tempest;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L From all calamity by fire and water;
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L And from everlasting death:
C Good Lord, deliver us.

L By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your holy nativity;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your agony and bloody sweat;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your cross and passion;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your precious death and burial;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L By Your glorious resurrection and ascension;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L And by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:
C **Help us, good Lord.**

L In all time of our tribulation;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L In all time of our prosperity;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L In the hour of death;
C **Help us, good Lord.**
L And in the day of judgment:
C **Help us, good Lord.**

L We poor sinners implore You
C **to hear us, O Lord.**

L To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church;
C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

- L** To preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To put an end to all schisms and causes of offense;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To beat down Satan under our feet;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To send faithful laborers into Your harvest;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** And to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

- L** To raise those who fall and to strengthen those who stand;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** And to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed:
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

- L** To give to all peoples concord and peace;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To preserve our land from discord and strife;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To give our country Your protection in every time of need;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To direct and defend our [*president*] and all in authority;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To bless and protect our magistrates and all our people;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To protect and guide all who travel;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

- L** To grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To defend all orphans and widows and provide for them;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To free those in bondage;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** And to have mercy on us all:
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** To give and preserve for our use the kindly fruits of the earth;
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** And graciously to hear our prayers:
- C** **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
- C** **we implore You to hear us.**
- L** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C** **have mercy.**
- L** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C** **have mercy.**
- L** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C** **grant us Your peace.**
- L** O Christ,
- C** **hear us.**
- L** O Lord,
- C** **have mercy.**
- L** O Christ,
- C** **have mercy.**
- L** O Lord,
- C** **have mercy. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

C 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.

Collects

L O Lord, the wicked say in their heart that You have forgotten. They murder the innocent and imagine that because others do not see it, neither will You. Arise, O Lord God, and lift up Your hand to put an end to the evil of abortion! Have mercy on our nation, hear the desire of the afflicted, incline Your ear and work by Your might, that men of this earth may strike terror on the unborn no more; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

L O God, our merciful Protector, arise with counsel and comfort for all expectant mothers vulnerable or pressured to seek abortion. Give them clarity of mind to see death for the enemy that it is, open their eyes to possibilities when they can see no other option, and give compassion to Your church, that she may be eager and ready to apply the balm of Christ's forgiveness and love to them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

L Merciful Father, You have promised that for Your own sake You blot out our transgressions and will not remember our sins. By Your blessed Gospel, forgive the sins of those who grieve past abortion decisions, and give them certainty that Your Son's absolving blood was shed to cover this very guilt and shame. Give readiness by Your Holy Spirit to pastors and Christian friends, that they may be surrounded by constant acclamations of their deliverance; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

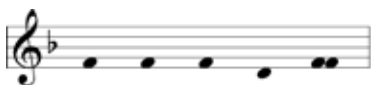
L Almighty and everlasting God, You rule all things in heaven and earth. Give Your wisdom to the leaders of this government and nations throughout the world, that they may seek to govern with justice and compassion. As they create policies and legislation, cause them to defend the lives of all people. We pray for judges and court officials, that they may seek to do what is right in Your eyes and that all their decisions would be founded in justice and truth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

L O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction



L Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

P The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God

and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.

G A - men.

Hymn

“O Christ, Our Hope, Our Hearts’ Desire” *LSB 553*

1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts’ de - sire, Cre -
 2 How vast Your mer - cy to ac - cept The
 3 But now the bonds of death are burst, The
 4 O let Your might - y love pre - vail To

a - tion’s might - y Lord, Re - deem - er of the
 bur - den of our sin And bow Your head in the
 ran - som has been paid; You now as - cend the
 purge us of our pride That we may stand be -

fall - en world, By ho - ly love out - poured:
 cru - el death To make us clean with - in.
 Fa - ther’s throne In robes of light ar - rayed.
 fore Your throne By mer - cy pu - ri - fied.

- 5 Christ Jesus, be our present joy,
 Our future great reward;
 Our only glory, may it be
 To glory in the Lord!

- △ 6 All praise to You, ascended Lord;
 All glory ever be
 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
 Through all eternity!

