



Unwrapping the

Gifts

Collects for the Present Pandemic

In the rapidly changing circumstances of this global pandemic, pastors will know best how to adjust, compose and extemporize prayers for the needs of services, broadcasts and other occasions. This collection of old and new prayers may assist them in their task. It may also be a helpful starting place for families and individual Christians in their own prayers. Above all, when Christians struggle to find the words to pray to God, we return to the simple prayer, “Lord, have mercy,” and the Church’s great expansion of that petition, The Litany (*Lutheran Service Book*, Page 288; lcms.org/litany).

Collect in Time of Pestilence

O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that we turn from our wickedness and live. Graciously behold Your people who plead to You, and spare us. Withdraw the scourge of Your wrath and be moved in mercy to turn away this pestilence from us; for the sake of Jesus Christ...

During an Epidemic

Almighty God, heavenly Father, give us grace to trust You during this time of illness and distress. In mercy put an end to the epidemic that afflicts us. Grant relief to those who suffer, and comfort all that mourn. Sustain all medical personnel in their labors, and cause Your people ever to serve You in

righteousness and holiness; through Jesus Christ... (291)

National Calamity

Lord God, we humbly confess to You that we deserve Your fatherly chastisement for our sins; yet we earnestly implore You, for Your name’s sake, to spare us in this time of disaster. Restrain all harmful powers and help Your suffering people that Your Word may be declared faithfully and without hindrance and that we, amending our sinful lives, may walk in safety and peace according to Your holy commandments; through Jesus Christ... (294)

Repentance and Prayer for Mercy

Spare us, O Lord! Remember not our many sins, but remember us according to Your mercy and for the sake of Your Son, whom You put to death for our deliverance. Give us Your Holy Spirit, that through the affliction of this pandemic He may create honest and contrite hearts in us and turn us away from our own self-confidence toward You, our only true confidence; through the same Jesus Christ...

In Fear and Anxiety

Almighty God, You alone are worthy of our fear and our trust and, by Your Son, You have given us peace. Turn us from every anxiety toward Your Fatherly heart made

known in Christ crucified. Do not let our faith rest on the shifting sand of this world's comforts and securities, but only on You. Help us to seek first Your kingdom and righteousness, confident that You will add every needful thing and work every circumstance together for our good; through the same Jesus Christ...

In Anxiety, Apprehension, and Fear

O most loving Father, You want us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing except losing You, and to lay all our cares on You, knowing that You care for us. Strengthen us in our faith in You. Grant that the fears and anxieties of this mortal life may not separate us from Your love shown to us in Jesus Christ... (787)

In Times of Unemployment

O God, You have always been the help and comfort of Your people. Support the unemployed in the day of their trouble and need. Give them faith to cast their cares on You, and preserve them from all bitterness and resentment. According to Your goodness increase the opportunity for their employment that with thankful hearts they may earn a just wage. Give to Your people everywhere a ready willingness to share their blessings with those in need. Make us merciful, even as You are merciful, O Father; through Jesus Christ... (289)

Another for the Unemployed

Heavenly Father, during His earthly ministry, Your Son had nowhere to lay His head. Look with pity on those laid off and who seek work but are unable to find any. Of Your tender mercy raise up opportunities for employment that in peace and thankfulness they may earn a just wage, serve their neighbor in love, and find the contentment that You promise; for the sake of Him by whose poverty we are made rich, even Jesus Christ... (854)

For Financial Anxiety

Almighty God, you graciously give Your children all that they need to support this body and life. Grant Your grace to all who are in financial distress or who are anxious about this life. Open Your hand and satisfy their needs. Do not let them fall into despair, resentment, or the mire of self-pity. Renew in them hope and faith. Give them the assurance of Your presence and the courage to face the trials of the days to come; through Jesus Christ... (869)

In Disappointment and Uncertainty

Heavenly Father, You alone determine our days. Give consolation to those whose plans have been turned to disappointment and bring stillness to those adrift in uncertainty. Gently reprove us when our pride leads us to turn away from You. Create in us new hearts fixed firmly in Your mercy, which is constant, Your salvation won for us in Christ, which is certain, and the hope of eternal life You have prepared for us, which does not disappoint; through the same Jesus Christ...

In Loneliness

Almighty God, You set the solitary in families. Look upon all who are lonely. Embrace them with Your love that in the midst of their pain they may know Your abiding presence. Help us to see Your love and care in the communion of saints and the company of angels; through Jesus Christ... (792)

For Love

Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son into our flesh, in whom we have a High Priest able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses and the richest demonstration of Your divine love. Embolden Your people by Your unfailing love to turn in love toward our neighbors. Drive out all fear, give due wisdom and caution, and set our hands to compassionate work and our mouths to

gracious words, that Your name may be made known and glorified in the midst of every sorrow; through Jesus Christ...

For Medical Workers

O Lord, You are the great Physician who alone can restore us forever. Give stamina, alertness and protection to doctors, nurses, emergency responders and all medical personnel in their difficult tasks. Help them remain compassionate in their work, give understanding to their patients and lead them by Your Word to rest in the strength of Christ, in whom their labors are never in vain; through the same Jesus Christ...

For Medical and Political Leaders

God of all might and wisdom, give to all political, civil and medical authorities the gifts of prudence, clarity, moderation and a spirit of cooperation, that every word and action they take may be judicious and effective for the benefit of their people. Preserve their bodies and minds. Give them due humility in their offices. Make them honorable in their work, that with joy we may honor them in ours for the sake of conscience and the good of our neighbor; through Jesus Christ...

For Pastors

Lord of the Harvest, protect and sustain the laborers You have sent into Your fields. Keep them healthy in body and mind. Against the accusations of Satan, convince them by Your Holy Spirit that their every sin and failing is forgiven for Christ's sake. Give them confidence, prudence and delight in their holy office, that they may be bold to bring the full arsenal of Your Word to bear in every situation. Give patience and understanding to Your saints in their care, and strengthen them in love and encouragement, that they may be a strong support for their pastors who serve them; through the same Jesus Christ...

For Congregations

O Lord, our heavenly Father, You have gathered us together around the Word of Your Son and the blessed Sacraments He instituted. Have mercy on every Christian congregation stressed by illness and precaution. In chaos and change, give us the peace which this world cannot give. Preserve us from sickness and fear. Refresh our generosity and love for one another. While caution and circumstance divide us from each other, help us find consolation in the communion of saints, in which we are never divided from Christ, our Head, nor from His body, the Church; through Jesus Christ...

For Churches That Have Temporarily Suspended the Blessed Sacrament

Heavenly Father, Your Son instituted the most blessed Sacrament for us Christians to eat and to drink, that what is promised in His Testament may be truly received by His friends and heirs. Have mercy on all who are kept from Your table in extraordinary circumstances and do not shut them out of Your Supper forever. Let the Words of Christ's Testament echo in their ears and hearts and, in true faith, let them believe these Words, trusting that they receive spiritually in faith exactly what Your Son has both won and declared: the forgiveness of sins. Stir up in us a desire to commune with our fellow Christians on Your true Body and Blood, and bring us soon to the table; through the same Jesus Christ...

For Homes

Gracious Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood is named, grant peace and safety to the homes of Your people. Make the heads of every household diligent in their task to teach their family, and enable them for this duty. Hear the prayers of those who call to You in every need. Let love and patience rule between husbands and wives, parents and children, and as we have received forgiveness

of all sins in Christ, so let the word of forgiveness bind together the members of every Christian home; through the same Jesus Christ...

For Nursing Homes

Lord, You are our God from the womb. Forsake us not when we are old and grey-headed. Look with kindness on those who are homebound, isolated or contained, especially the elderly and the fragile. Protect them from this and every illness. Turn them from their fears in this world toward Your Son in faith and hope. As you have promised to be our dear Father in Holy Baptism, so also You have joined us to Christ's death and resurrection. Renew in Your saints the

confidence that nothing can separate us from the love of God; in the same Jesus Christ...

For Schools

Gracious Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood is named, we thank You for parents, teachers and all who labor in our schools to teach and care for children. Keep them diligent in their tasks. Help them to show the same concern and excitement even from a distance. Renew the diligence of parents in fulfilling Your command to bring their children up in the fear and instruction of the Lord. Give peace and security to students and grant patience to all. In the manifold chances and changes of this life, fix our hearts where true joys are to be found: through Jesus Christ...