



PORTALS
of PRAYER

**Where Is
God Now?**

PORTALS *of* PRAYER

Where Is God Now? Sixty Devotions

by

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3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
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Order of Family Worship

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

SILENT PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

A PSALM may be read by the leader or by the family in response.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

THE PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.

All: Amen.

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Martin Luther's Morning Prayer

Make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Martin Luther's Evening Prayer

Make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

— Quoted from Luther's Small Catechism

Read Luke 13:1–7

Psalm 147:1–11

Pride *after* a Fall?

Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?

Luke 13:4

When tragedy strikes, some observers want to blame it on the afflicted. What did they do to deserve their trials? We may fear that, if tragedy could strike others, it could also hit us.

Those who suffer often blame themselves as well, wondering which sin God had singled out to punish. Perhaps we harbor the secret pride that we've finally done something bad enough for the Lord to notice. Regardless, we easily are tempted to think that the explanation for the tragedy lies within us. Like the people who asked Jesus about the tower victims, we want Him to assign blame.

But Jesus will have none of it. His reply shows us that we all need to repent. Christ calls sufferers and observers alike to repent—not only of particular sins, but also of all wicked thoughts, words, and deeds—and to trust Him alone for mercy and salvation.

Our Savior's own world came crashing down around Him. The temple of His body was torn down and then rebuilt on the third day. Now He comes to heal and rebuild our broken lives. Out of the rubble, He constructs a palace, cleansing our hearts to serve as His throne for the rest of time and all of eternity.

Gracious Lord Jesus, my old life has collapsed around me. Rebuild me in Your image. Amen.

Read Job 1:6–21

Psalm 88:1–13

Your sons and daughters . . . are dead.

Job 1:18–19

My Baby Is Gone!

When a son or daughter is struck down, our own hopes and dreams die too.

It doesn't matter whether we lost them as newborn babes, in the heart of youth, or as adults living far from us.

Job remains maddeningly complacent: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). *Bless* God? How? He took away the best blessing! Doesn't He understand?

He certainly does. Your heavenly Father knows intimately the agony of His Son being torn from Him, struck down in the prime of life. He sat watch through three dark hours, then tore His clothing—the temple curtain—at Jesus' death. He did this not only to feel our pain, but also to remove it from us. He gave His eternal Son that He might gain His created children for all eternity.

Perhaps you've sung, "Take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Though these all be gone, Our vict'ry has been won" (*LW* 298:4). Our Father in heaven suffered the loss of His Son in order to comfort us in our losses. Losing a child still hurts. We weep and mourn. Yet we can be certain that, just as God raised His only-begotten Son, so He will raise His children of faith.

*Blessed be Your name,
O Lord: By it, this child
was sealed; through it,
this child will be raised;
and in it, this child will
live forever. Amen.*

Read Job 2:1–10

Psalm 41

All that a man
has he will give
for his life.

Job 2:4

Good Health a Distant Memory

Taking Job's possessions and children didn't wreck Job's trust in God, so Satan attempted to draw Job away from the Lord by robbing him of health. While Job was unaware of the cosmic battle focused on him, he did realize that all our times are ultimately in the hands of our loving God: "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

When we receive evil, especially chronic ill health, continuing trust in God becomes difficult. Whether we doubt His love and power or our own worthiness, months and years of treatments and therapies weigh heavily upon us. Must we drag that oxygen everywhere? Why bother with dialysis three days a week? Money is tight; time is precious. Would it be better to give in to the affliction and let it take us?

Job's resounding *no* comes from a heart that trusts in God's ultimate good. If good health allows us to serve God actively, poor health brings us to depend upon His grace passively. It erases confidence in one's self and replaces it with trust in the Lord. It allows us to testify to the One who, in Christ, gives us strength to continue, weak and weary though we may be.

*As You bless me in
times of strength,
so You sustain me in
times of weakness.
Thank You for both
of these blessings,
dear Lord. Amen.*

Read Job 19:23–27

Psalm 18:1–6

Assurance Set in Stone

Oh that my words . . .
were engraved in
the rock forever!
For I know that my
Redeemer lives.

Job 19:23–25

Personal, family, and public calamities test the Christian's response to God's promises. It's easy to accept His Word in times of plenty, but it's a stiff challenge in times of loss and need. "Thy will be done," we pray throughout life—and then we face accepting what that will determines in our time of suffering.

Job was no cockeyed optimist, hoping against hope that things would somehow right themselves. He realized that all his times and seasons were under God's unshakable control. His desire to have this confidence "engraved in the rock" came because he already stood secure upon the Rock of Ages.

This same Lord, our rock and our salvation—the rejected stone who became the cornerstone—still supports all who trust in Him. Sin, death, and the devil are dashed to pieces upon Him as He stands firm in life's storms. He inspires confidence by His Word, as He makes His promises to His people, and by His deed, as Scripture testifies of Job, Moses, Daniel, and others. Even death by stoning couldn't force Stephen to abandon the rock of his salvation. Nor can our present troubles cast us down from our secure position, for we stand on Christ.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee. Amen.*

LW 361:1

Read Job 34:10–15

Psalm 37:1–7

Unjust Desserts

The Almighty will not pervert justice.

Job 34:12

His three elders couldn't shake Job from believing that he was blameless, so Elihu challenged him. He, too, fell into the trap of trying to explain God's unrevealed motives, mixing truth and fiction in a manner we still hear today.

Elihu wasn't totally correct when he said, "According to the work of a man He will repay him" (Job 34:11). God's justice is much more severe than Elihu imagined. He cannot repay *any* good we do, for no truly good work comes from sinners.

God's mercy likewise exceeds Elihu's imagination, for He doesn't treat us as we deserve. If "paybacks are hell," then Jesus experienced hell's pain on the cross instead of us. God placed full blame for our sins on His Son and punished Him accordingly. But to us He gives full credit for Christ's righteousness.

Troubles aren't punishment for specific sins; God punished Jesus for *all* sin. If we suffer, it's for guidance and correction. When friends misapply God's judgment toward us, Christ reminds us that He bore the consequences of God's unperverted justice toward sin. He "repays" faith by giving stronger faith and remaining our one true friend in every time of need.

Dearest Jesus, You bore our sins and griefs on the cross that we might receive Your true comfort and peace. Amen.

Read Job 35

Psalm 4

Can You Hear Me, God?

**Surely God
does not hear
an empty cry.**

Job 35:13

A cell phone ad campaign sent its main character all across the country, into all sorts of places, to test the company's ability to connect its callers. Everywhere he went, he asked, "Can you hear me now?"

Things get serious when God is the intended recipient of our call. "Can You hear me now, God?" we ask from the peaks of pain and the depths of despair. "Surely," Elihu said, "God does not hear an empty cry." So how do we know our cry isn't empty? What fills it up, giving it power and clarity to reach the throne of grace?

Scripture answers that Jesus "always lives to make intercession for" those in need (Hebrews 7:25). Joining the Son, "the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). Even if suffering and sorrow empty our prayers of their full content, focus, and power, the Father hears us because He loves us and has promised to hear us through His Son and Spirit, who call out with and for us.

God hears us because He hears Jesus. He knows what we truly need because His Holy Spirit searches our hearts. He answers because He promises to answer all who trust His grace for the sake of His beloved Son.

***Dear Father, remove
my doubts and invite
me to pray with all
boldness and
confidence for the
sake of Your Son,
Jesus Christ. Amen.***

Read Job 36:5–16

Psalm 30

He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.

Job 36:15

Healing Hurts and Hurting Heals

Modern medical science fixes what's broken and replaces what's missing. It also may involve removing whatever is diseased, damaged, or harmful to us. In the same way, God may choose to work through painful trials in order to remove our preoccupation with the passing things of this life. He cuts away pride in self, confidence in earthly relationships, and reliance on worldly possessions so we might behold the permanent treasures stored up for us in heaven.

Lest we think we're alone, Jesus, although He was rich, became poor for our sakes. Then for us He faced agony, abandonment, and loss of all earthly goods. His Word calls us to inherit the blessings He won in His Passion, where His pain paid for our transgressions and His wounds procured our healing.

His holy afflictions sanctify ours. Our pain is given purpose through His. As Jesus' suffering brought us eternal good, so God works good through our suffering, stripping away self-loving attitudes and self-serving behavior and replacing them with Christ's love for us and His desire to serve others in need.

*Wash me and take away each stain;
Let nothing of my sin remain.
For cleansing, though it be through pain,
Christ Crucified, I come. Amen.*

LW 356:3

God Is at Work

Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:2

St. Paul tells us that God is at work for Christians, justifying them and giving peace and access to grace through the work of Christ. He causes us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. God is a hard worker.

But as we look at our lives, there are other events we notice—loss, death, sickness, lack, and many others. We might call these things *sufferings*. How do these fit into this picture of God’s work in our lives? When we suffer, is God far away? Has He left us when we weep, feel alone, or are hurt?

St. Paul says, emphatically, *no!* In fact, St. Paul tells us that God is at work *in* these moments, producing gifts such as endurance, character, and hope. God uses the sufferings in our lives to bless us. The suffering stings, but that sting is like the prick of a doctor’s needle: the pain precedes the gift of healing.

This is how God works: He brings good from the painful and unexpected. Look at Christ on the cross: there is suffering and woe; yet from that, God brings the greatest good: our salvation and peace. Our sufferings are joined to our Lord’s, and through such things God works to bless us.

*O Lord, I call to You
from the depths;
answer me in Your
mercy. Amen.*

Read Romans 6:1–11

Psalm 27

We *Can* Get There from Here

All of us who have
been baptized
into Christ Jesus
were baptized
into His death.

Romans 6:3

You can't get there from here." That's the punch line to more than a few jokes and stories. Someone is stuck in a small town, wanting to get to a highway and a bigger town, but the locals just laugh and say, "You can't get there from here."

As Christians, we often feel like that. We hear talk of heaven and joy and happiness, and we feel as if we can't get there from where we are. We are stuck in sadness and do not know joy or peace. What is the way out? Where is the road to joy and peace?

Jesus says, "I am the way" (John 14:6). What He meant was not that we walk a smooth, paved highway to ecstasy and happiness. Jesus meant that we follow Him on His path. His road was one of crucifixion and pain, then glory and resurrection. His way is the way of death, then life. First humiliation, then exaltation.

Our Baptism places us on that path. When we are baptized into Christ, we are made members of His body. We walk on His path. We first know hardship and pain. God promises that they mark the way to heaven with Jesus. He will never forsake or leave us. He will raise us to be like Him.

The truth is that we *can* get there from here, for we follow a crucified and risen Lord!

*Lord, You are my
light and salvation.
Stay with me. Amen.*

Read Romans 8:18–28

Psalm 91

If we hope for
what we do not
see, we wait for
it with patience.

Romans 8:25

Hoping for What You Cannot See

There is always tension between what we can see and feel and what God promises.

Our senses tell us one thing; God's promises, another. Our senses may tell us that life is great and the future looks wonderful. Or they may say, "That hurts" or "I'm sad" or "I can't see any hope." Often the messages from experience or emotion are so loud it's difficult to hear anything else.

In times of blessing or strife, faith turns away from the incessant whine of our perceptions to the sweet melody of God's Word. Here we are given a different message. It points to the glory that is to be revealed. That glory is far greater and more real than the distress or joy we know now.

By Christ's victory on the cross, our Father secured our future. Our glory in Christ is unshakable. God's promises are brought to reality for us in the Gospel, in the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, and in the Word and water of Baptism. These avenues of promise and proclamation may seem less real than the tears we cry or the loss we feel, but they have the Word of almighty God behind them. The glory they reveal is permanent, while all our fleeting troubles surely will pass away.

*Lord, thank You
for Your promises,
which sustain us in
the midst of every
trouble. Amen.*

Read Romans 8:31–39

Psalm 65

**Nor anything else
in all creation,
will be able to
separate us from
the love of God
in Christ Jesus
our Lord.**

Romans 8:39

Nothing Can Come between Us

When we look at the difficult circumstances of our lives, it is easy to make lists. We could write down lists of what we do not have: riches, righteousness, peace, order, health.

We can make lists of what we do have and wish we didn't: troubles, sins, shame, weakness, tears, grief, uncertainty. The lists could go on and on.

God makes lists too. But guess what? His lists are different. He makes lists of everything the cross of Jesus Christ conquered. His lists are long, and everything we can possibly think of is on those lists—death, our sins, our loneliness, our discouragement, our weakness, our troubles—you name it. The cross of Christ is the conquering weapon of God. All things are under the crucified feet of our Lord.

This means that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Make your list as long as you want. Fill it with the worst imaginable. Then read St. Paul's list in Romans 8. Read it again. You will see your list does not come between God and you. Christ's cross has cemented God to us. He is with us and continues to love us and care for us, and nothing, *nothing*, can change that.

***Thank You, Jesus,
for defeating all
my enemies. Amen.***

Read Ephesians
1:3–14
Psalm 69:29–36

Heirs of Life

**In Him we have
obtained an
inheritance.**

Ephesians 1:11

Little jumbles our feelings more than settling an estate. We tell ourselves that we'd give up whatever we inherit to have our dear family member back, yet wonder how much we're going to get. We may even argue with fellow heirs, often about worthless items.

Usually, it's not about how much we receive. We just want to know that we were appreciated by the one who died. We desire something to help keep the memories fresh. Yet the pain of our recent loss, our fear of death, and our sinful natures work together to spoil a pure and honest appreciation of our inheritance.

We need the contentment of knowing our eternal inheritance. The One who died to give us heaven's blessings is also the One who lives and who will call us home to receive those blessings. He will not write us out of His will, because He signed His promises in His blood and sealed them for all believers. The promised inheritance helps us become less selfish and more willing to share with others.

As we mourn family and friends who die in the faith, we also celebrate God's salvation now completed in them. So, too, we anticipate receiving the legacy of our own adoption in the resurrection.

***As we mourn, O Lord,
purify our hearts, and
grant that we receive
with all the saints our
promised inheritance.***

Amen.

Read Ephesians
3:14–21
Luke 1:46–55

Filling the Hole

**[I pray] that you
may be filled
with all the
fullness of God.**

Ephesians 3:19

Physical suffering, financial setbacks, and the shock of death tear holes in us. Empty, we focus on the hurt, asking God to ease our pain, speed our healing, and deliver us from this present evil hour.

Often, our prayers amount to asking for an aspirin to heal a migraine or a couple of sardines to feed us for a week. They briefly touch on our current needs but have little depth or extent. We focus so much on our immediate concerns that we easily forget how completely God cares for us.

To keep us from selling His mercies short, God invites us to pray for abiding faith, deep-rooted love, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To keep us from asking only that our pain be removed, He teaches us to want our suffering to be sanctified through the suffering of His Son until sin—the root of all afflictions—is totally cast down on the Last Day.

God desires to provide meals, not morsels. He wants to remake us completely—body, mind, and spirit. Why sip His cup of blessing when He bids us to drink deeply and quench our thirst? He fills the aching hole within us, filling us “with all the fullness of God.”

*Grant, Lord Jesus, that my healing
In Your holy wounds I find.
Cleanse my spirit, will, and feeling;
Heal my body, soul, and mind. Amen.*

LW 95:1

Read 2 Corinthians
1:3–10
Psalm 77:1–15

School of Comfort

**Blessed be the
God and Father
of our Lord Jesus
Christ, . . . who
comforts us
in all our affliction.**

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

The school of hard knocks is a rough education—like learning boxing by being knocked senseless or swimming by nearly drowning. Accident, illness, loss, and death certainly belong to this school.

God, however, enrolls believers in a special “school of comfort.” He gives suffering meaning beyond mere survival. He humbles us by our suffering. By giving us His comfort in Word and Sacrament and His love through the presence and patience of others, He teaches us how to give comfort.

Suffering tunes our hearts to recognize the pain of others. It sharpens our ability to act appropriately to others’ hurting conditions. By His Word, Christ’s peace settles upon us, grows within us, and gives us confidence to share His blessing with those in need.

Suffering is not hollow or meaningless for Christian people. We follow a crucified Savior, who carried the world’s pain in His body on the cross. He carries us in our suffering, so our lives express His redeeming love.

As He has comforted us, so “we share abundantly in comfort too” (2 Corinthians 1:5).

*Where the wound is and the hurting,
Pour in oil and cleansing wine.
Let Your cross, its pow’r asserting,
Touch my life with grace divine.
Amen.*

LW 95:4

Read 2 Corinthians
12:1–10
Psalm 94:12–23

Rose among Thorns

**A thorn was given
me in the flesh.**

2 Corinthians 12:7

For the good of His people, Christ turns Satan’s thorny messengers to His own purposes. Even as they puncture our balloon of self-importance, the barbs point to Jesus. He endured “weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities” (2 Corinthians 12:10) for us. Therefore, we are content in our weakness, because through Christ we are strong.

He who bore the crown of thorns on our behalf is also the Rose who bloomed in this world’s sin-parched desert. Yet His beauty often eludes the casual glance. Believers may get so wrapped up in dashing from crisis to catastrophe that they forget to “stop and smell the roses”—at least the one perfect Flower. In so doing, we cause the thorns of life to tear even more.

Yet even then, the truth of Christ’s words through St. Paul comes home to us: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Even our afflictions are in the hands of our loving Lord, for in them He shows us that He really does what He promises. He strengthens our faith. Our prayers arise, sweet-smelling. And the Word we bring to others refreshes those wearied on their way.

*Dear Jesus, give us
Your patience and
strength in our thorns
that we may blossom
to Your praise and the
glory of Your Father.
Amen.*

No More Sea

I saw a new heaven
and a new earth, . . .
and the sea was
no more.

Revelation 21:1

know the lethal power of wind and wave to swimming children who fear what may lurk in the lake beneath their feet, the watery depths represent the dread power and murkiness of the grave.

But consider the new heavens and the new earth that shall be revealed at Christ's return: there shall be no more sea! There shall be no more death or anything that causes us fear or pain. Jesus has descended to the depths of death for us. He was swallowed up in the sea of our sin, so that in turn He might swallow up death forever. Now He has arisen from the deep to give us abundant life without end.

Christ, the Church's husband, is forever with His Church to comfort her and to wipe every tear from her eyes. Her overwhelming sea is dried up, and she is now given to drink of the gentle fountain of the water of life. Baptized into Christ, she is adorned beautifully in the robe of His righteousness.

As we live in the midst of things that seem to engulf us, He reminds us that such things will pass away. So we trust in Jesus' promise: "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

The sea has long symbolized death and all that terrifies us. From mariners who

know the lethal power of wind and wave to swimming children who

fear what may lurk in the lake beneath their feet, the watery depths represent the dread power and murkiness of the grave.

*Lord Jesus, grant
that my hope may
be set on the new
creation in You.
Amen.*

Read Philippians
1:3–11
Psalm 142

The Lord Finishes What He Starts

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6

Sometimes people don't see their work all the way through to the end. The pursuit of the college degree falls a few classes short. A hobby or home improvement project is left half-done.

A special task at work never seems to get finished.

In the midst of trying times, we can be tempted to think that's also how God is toward us. Everything started well when we were growing up in the faith. But now things are different, more complicated. It seems as if we're a project left on God's workbench, never to be resumed again. We feel forgotten.

But do not give in to such temptation. The Lord does not go back on His promises or give up on His people. He began a good work in you at your Baptism, giving you new life in Christ. And He has promised never to leave you or forsake you. He works even through trials to purify and strengthen your faith. The Lord Jesus has done His work of saving you all the way to the end, as He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He who went all the way to death for you will certainly finish the work He began in you, bringing your salvation to its completion on the day of His return.

Lord, help me to trust that You will never give up on me and that You are with me to the very end. Amen.

Read 2 Thessalonians
1:3–12
Psalm 56

Rest from Your Troubles in Christ

**[God will] give you
who are troubled
rest with us when
the Lord Jesus
is revealed
from heaven.**

**2 Thessalonians
1:7 NKJV**

Some of the worst troubles we experience are those that others inflict on us deliberately. Then it's personal, and the hurt is deeper. Most hurtful are the injuries we do not deserve, especially when we are attacked for confessing Christ, harassed for what we believe.

Why does God permit others to trouble us like that? Because that is also how Christ was treated for our sake. A disciple is not above his teacher. To suffer with Christ is also to be counted worthy of God's kingdom. Jesus affirms, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Matthew 5:11–12).

God gives us strength to endure such troubles through Christ, who endured them for us in His Passion and death. And when our Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, we will be given rest and relief from all that burdens us. Even now Christ gives us rest in His Word and in the Supper of His body and blood. His peace helps us persevere until that day when we marvel in His majesty and share in His glory.

***O Lord, "Restless is our heart
until it comes to rest in Thee"
(from Augustine). Give us
Your rest and peace. Amen.***

The Taste of Death

But we see . . . Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9

fear and doubt are the devil's weapons to hold us captive.

But Jesus has destroyed the devil's dominion over us. Since we are flesh and blood, Jesus shared in our flesh and blood to break the curse of death for us and to release us from sin and Satan. The Son of God became man in order to taste death for everyone, that its bitterness might leave our mouths. By dying our death in our place, Jesus atoned for our sins. The power of the grave now is broken. Death is no longer a gaping terror, but the portal to life and resurrection.

Just as Christ was crowned with glory because of His sacrificial suffering, so also His brothers and sisters who trust in Him will be brought to glory with Him. In Christ, we taste life. "Taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).

*Lord Jesus, thank
You for tasting
death for me that
I may live forever
with You. Amen.*

Read Hebrews 4:14–16

Psalm 143

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.

Hebrews 4:15

The God Who Sympathizes

When we are suffering, it can seem as if God is very far away. He’s “up there,” aloof, distant from what’s going on down here. Sure, He may know the facts of what’s happening to us, but does He really understand or care?

Scripture’s answer is a definite *yes*. The same Son of God who passed through the heavens far above us came down among us as a real human being. He lived our life all the way from conception to the grave. Though He was without sin, He experienced all the effects of sin’s curse. He sympathizes with our weaknesses and suffering and sorrows, because He Himself has known them. He knows what it’s like to be tested and tempted and pushed to the limit. He carried all of our burdens to the cross and suffered them to death in His body to redeem us from them. So He does not forsake you in your time of need. He is with you in your suffering to deliver you and bring you into His Easter triumph. He is still Immanuel, God with us.

Confident of this, we come to His throne of grace in bold faith. Our Lord Jesus surely hears our prayers and will give us the mercy and help we need, according to His good and gracious will.

Lord Jesus, who bore my weaknesses, give me Your aid, that I may find strength in You. Amen.

Read Hebrews 12:3–13
Psalm 86

**The Lord disciplines
the one He loves,
and chastises
every son whom
He receives.**

Hebrews 12:6

The Lord Disciplines Those He Loves

When bad things happen to us, we can be tempted to think that God doesn't love us or care about us. It feels like His judgment is coming down on us in its full fury. But the truth is that the wrath of God has already been set aside, once and for all. Judgment was executed against us on Good Friday, when the Lord suffered for us on the cross. All our sins were fully answered for by Jesus' death. The Lord does not condemn us for our sins because Jesus has taken the condemnation for them in our place.

Yet God sometimes allows bad things to happen to us for our discipline. Just as an earthly father disciplines and corrects the children he loves for their ultimate good, so also our heavenly Father disciplines us. His discipline truly is a sign of His love. He doesn't want us to stray from Him or set our hearts on the things of this world. So we sometimes feel the pain of His discipline and the rod of His correction, in order that we might have the ultimate good of life with Him in the world to come.

Take heart, then, in the chastening of the Lord, for by it you know that He receives you as His own in Christ, His beloved Son.

*Heavenly Father, help me to
see Your love in the discipline
I must endure. Amen.*

Kept Safe

According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

1 Peter 1:3–4

What is most important and precious to us in life can be swept away in a matter of moments. It might be the loss of home or property to a storm, a sudden end to employment and income, a crisis of personal health, or the devastating death of a family member. All that we considered as most secure can come to a sudden, and sometimes frightening, end.

Yet in the face of all possible losses, we still have certainty and security. There is a gift that no crisis, storm, or grief can take from us. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have an inheritance of eternal life that is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” for us. Even in the midst of trials, when we are “tested by fire” (1 Peter 1:7), we are kept safe by God’s power and guarded by faith. Nourished by His Word and Sacrament, we will—when the time is right—receive the inheritance of eternal life that is waiting for us.

Father, keep us safe through all trials until we receive the inheritance of eternal life won for us by Jesus Christ. Amen.

Why Me?

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.

1 Peter 4:13

Why is this happening to me?" You may have asked that question before. You may be asking it right now. We want to make sense of our suffering. Suffering of any kind, physical, emotional, or spiritual, may

leave us feeling very much alone, convinced that no one else has experienced what we feel, and that we do not deserve what is happening to us.

It is no surprise that this question comes to mind in difficult or frightening circumstances, but the Scripture reading tells us not to be surprised at the "fiery trial" (v. 12) that has come up as a test of faith. Tests of faith are normal. They are occasions, not for surprise, but for joy, because they are a share in the sufferings of Christ.

Christ certainly did not deserve to die on the cross, but He suffered there for us, to restore us to the Father. Resting securely in Him, we can rejoice. Even more important, He assures us that this rejoicing will never end. So we have joy here on earth at sharing Christ's suffering, and we look forward to the eternal joy of sharing His glory.

Heavenly Father, turn our questions into joy and our impatience into trust, in the name of Jesus Christ, who suffered for us on the cross. Amen.

No Deals

**There is no fear
in love, but perfect
love casts out fear.
For fear has to do
with punishment,
and whoever fears
has not been
perfected in love.
We love because
He first loved us.**

1 John 4:18–19

our trouble is a punishment for sin, and we are tempted to think that we must somehow earn back the love of God we are afraid we have lost.

But God’s love is never a reaction to any effort on our part. “In this is love,” the Scripture reading says, “not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (v. 10). God is love, and because of His love for us, He sent His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to suffer the punishment we deserved for our sin. We don’t need to strike a bargain with God. The full price has already been paid in Jesus’ innocent blood. Because Jesus died for us and rose again to conquer death, fear of God’s judgment is replaced with confidence in His perfect love.

There are no atheists in fox-holes,” the saying goes. But there may well be some bargain hunters. In times of trouble, it is not unusual to try and make a deal with God. We are willing to promise whatever we can in exchange for relief from our difficult circumstances. We imagine that

***Father, Your perfect
love for us in Christ
drives away our fear.
Keep us safe in that
love. Amen.***

Read Psalm 46
Psalm 8

A Sure Foundation

**The LORD of hosts
is with us;
the God of Jacob
is our fortress.**

Psalm 46:7

Modern safety codes call for strict engineering standards, but the intense power of a tornado or hurricane can tear a building apart. A powerful earthquake can make solid ground behave like liquid, shaking what we thought was a solid foundation. Sudden disaster, rumors of war, and unexpected terror can shake our faith as surely as a tremor shakes the earth. We easily are left with the idea that God is weak, powerless, disinterested, or absent.

Psalm 46 describes God's people as a strong city. Surrounded by roaring seas, shattering mountains, and raging nations, believers are secure because God Himself stands tall and strong among them. When we find ourselves surrounded by fear, doubt, and the shattering guilt of our sin, He gives safety beneath the cross, where Jesus shed His blood for us. God has not abandoned us. Faithful to His promises, He stands stalwart among us even now in Word and Sacrament. Through the saving Word of Christ's death and resurrection for us, God "will be exalted among the nations" (v. 10) and in our own lives. "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress"!

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*Lord of hosts, for the sake of
Christ, hear our prayer and
be our refuge, our fortress,
and our help in trouble.
Amen.*

Read Psalm 121
Luke 2:29–32

**My help comes
from the LORD,
who made heaven
and earth.**

Psalm 121:2

The Lord Who Made Heaven and Earth

God creates out of nothing. It is the special quality of God to “make out of nothing.”

This means that out of the nothings of despair, the effects of sin, and the catastrophes of life, God makes a child who belongs to Him, a forgiven saint and a citizen of heaven.

Look at your life and count the nothings. Count the hurts. Measure the darkness. These are the things out of which God creates. It seems strange, doesn't it? We are used to looking for God in the beautiful, the strong, and the enduring. Of course, God is in all those things. But when we see God in Christ, we see ugliness and crucifixion and suffering and lowliness. Yet out of the cross, God created life for all, victory over death, and payment for sin.

The God of the cross is our God now. Yes, we suffer. Yes, we fall to depths we would rather not be in. Yes, we sin. Yes, we face death. But our God is the God who made heaven and earth, the God of resurrection from death, the God who delivers the lowly who trust in Him. God takes our nothings and our depths, and out of them He creates and resurrects and exalts us! Thanks be to our God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God who creates all things new through Christ, our Lord.

*O Lord, be with me always,
in dark times or light. Amen.*

Read Ecclesiastes
3:1–8
Psalm 104:19–35

A Time to Weep

**A time to weep,
and a time
to laugh.**

Ecclesiastes 3:4

The great thing about the seasons is that they change. Fall would not be as beautiful without summer before and winter ahead. The crisp colors of the leaves and brisk evenings would not be as special if we had not endured the hot summer or anticipated the cold snow.

It's the same in our lives. On account of the fallen world in which we live, we know there will be seasons of weeping. Yet, by the grace of God, these times do not last. The disciples were paralyzed by grief and fear on the weekend of our Lord's Passion, yet Easter came! Weeping carried the night, but joy came in the morning. The season of fear was displaced by the season of alleluia.

Our own times of sorrow will not last forever. God does not burden us beyond our strength. The changing seasons of our lives remind us of God's ultimate promise to deliver us from evil and take us to Himself in heaven. Our times of sadness are only a prelude to joy; the darkness makes even brighter the great light of our Lord's salvation.

Mark the time. Watch the sun set and rise again. Feel the seasons change. Hear the Word of Christ and know God is at work to bring you joy, to replace your tears, and to give you His mercy in the midst of pain.

***Lord, thank You for
Your unchanging
goodness in the
midst of so much
change. Amen.***

Read Isaiah 35
Psalm 42

A Desert Transformed

The desert shall
rejoice and
blossom like
the crocus.

Isaiah 35:1

Deserts are places of thirst, cacti, and heat. One famous desert is named Death Valley on account of its fierce reputation as a killer. Death Valley may allow you

in, but it may not let you out. Getting out by yourself can be very difficult.

Christ went into the desert to be tempted and to battle Satan in a place of thirst and death. He did not go to win a victory for Himself, but for us. Our lives often resemble deserts in the grip of some awful power that will not allow gladness to bloom or joy to spring forth. But Christ has gone into the wilderness of our lives and walked the valley of the shadow of death for us. He grants us His victory in our Baptism. We are members of His crucified, desert-conquering body.

Isaiah gives a picture of a desert changed into blossoms and beauty, of thirst and death into rejoicing and gladness. The message is that our desert lives have been inhabited by Christ, who gives refreshment and renewal by His presence. Where Christ is, there is life and joy. The desert is not gone; we are not on a vacation in our baptismal struggle. Yet we have our Savior by our side, and He gives us to drink from the fountain of life and guides our feet on the path of life.

*O Lord, let us always
drink from Your
fountain of life!
Amen.*

Read Isaiah 40:1–11

Psalm 24

Help Is on the Way

“Behold your God!”

**Behold, the Lord God
comes with might.**

Isaiah 40:9–10

Just ask; I’ll do whatever you need.” “I’m there for you.” “You’re in my thoughts.”

How many times do we hear comments like these from well-meaning people? Too often, they end up being mere words, good intentions with no follow-through, or actions that don’t really help. Government agencies and even congregations can be the same way: lots of talk but no meaningful action. “Surely the people are grass” (Isaiah 40:7).

When our Lord speaks, it is different. When God promises, when He says He is coming with might, His words are not empty. Our Lord is a God of promise *and* fulfillment. God saw our world of sin and spoke, “I will send a Savior.” His promise sustained generations of the faithful as they endured suffering, exile, and death. They hoped in the One to come. And He came. Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh, died on a cross to break sin’s grip on us. God promises and fulfills.

God speaks to us in the midst of our suffering, saying, “I will come to you. I will set things right,” and our faith latches onto His promise and believes His Word. He speaks and forgives our sins. He speaks and gives His body and blood for our life and strength. He speaks, and His Word stands forever.

*Lord, Your promises are sure.
Set my faith on You. Amen.*

Read Isaiah 43:1–11

Psalm 139

Actions Speak Loudly

**When you pass
through the waters,
I will be with you.**

Isaiah 43:2

When my youngest child is scared by a thunderstorm or a bad dream, I sometimes feel helpless. Her body shakes, the tears roll, and I cannot chase away the bad thoughts or quiet the booming sky. But often she just curls up next to her mom or me, and soon she is better. She didn't need for us to make the storm go away; she only needed to be near us.

We never outgrow that need. Floods threaten, fires burn, and we need someone to be with us, someone to get wet with us, to feel the scorching heat of the flames. We need someone more powerful, someone who can shield us, defend us, and lift us up.

That someone has a name: Immanuel, "God with us." Our Lord is not an absent, faraway God. He is God made flesh, the Son of Mary. He was born like we are, He lived like we do, and He died like we will.

We have no assurance from Scripture that there will be no fires or floods in our path. There will be bad dreams and thunderstorms. But we have Immanuel, God who lived and died and rose and who promises to be with us always, even to the end of the age. We are His baptized children, whom He never forsakes. He grabs hold of us and never lets go. He is with us. He will be with us. We are baptized, and He is our Immanuel.

*Thank You, Jesus,
for being my Im-
manuel. Amen.*

In Unexpected Places

He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

Isaiah 53:5

When life runs along smoothly—when we have some financial security or enjoy good health—it’s easy to imagine that God cares for us and blesses us. But when even one part of a peaceful life changes, we may suddenly feel that God is out of the picture. We tend to look for God only in pleasant situations—in health, wealth, and peaceful times. But God is also at work in other circumstances.

Isaiah says Jesus “had no form or majesty” and “no beauty” that would have drawn people to recognize Him as God in the flesh (v. 2). Those who expect to find the Savior revealed only in majesty and beauty look in the wrong places. Jesus was not recognized—He was despised and rejected. He was crucified as a criminal “with the wicked” and buried in the borrowed tomb of “a rich man in His death” (Isaiah 53:9).

What a gift this is for us, especially in hard times! God’s greatest blessings are forged at the cross. No matter how great our suffering, He already has borne our pain. He brings blessing even through our trials, a promise reflected in His victory over death!

Lord, thank You for being present in our lives, in good and bad times, in expected and unexpected places. Amen.

Steadfast Love

**For the mountains
may depart and the
hills be removed,
but My steadfast
love shall not
depart from you.**

Isaiah 54:10

these questions, Isaiah’s word from the Lord seems to give no relief: “In overflowing anger for a moment I hid My face from you” (v. 8). Yet there is solace hidden in these words.

Our sin earned God’s anger. But, in His mercy, His overflowing anger was not directed at us, but at His only Son. He carried our sins in His own body on the cross. Jesus endured the utter despair of being deserted by His Father. Overwhelmed by God’s wrath against sin, He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). Jesus knew what it was to feel, for a moment, God’s hidden face.

Because our Savior endured God’s momentary anger on our behalf, God’s wrath is ended, and God will never hide His face from us. In all circumstances, even if “the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,” God promises for the sake of Jesus Christ that His steadfast love will never depart from us.

A broken relationship, a crisis of health, loss of home or income—such circumstances prod us to ask, What did I do to deserve this? Why is God angry with me? As we struggle with

*Heavenly Father, hold us
securely in Your steadfast
love throughout all the
changes and challenges
of our lives. Amen.*

Never Abandoned

**When You did
awesome things that
we did not look for,
You came down,
the mountains quaked
at Your presence.**

Isaiah 64:3

When trouble appears in life, it's all too easy to imagine that God has disappeared. Like us, the people of Israel remembered that God had acted to save them in the past. They knew He was the God

who had caused nations to tremble and mountains to quake. But with the city of Jerusalem in ruins and the temple burned, the Israelites felt that their powerful, saving God had abandoned them. They begged Him to “rend the heavens and come down” (v. 1) to forgive and save them. They reminded Him that He was the God known to act for those who waited for Him.

If you ever begin to think that God has disappeared from your life or abandoned you, remember what He did in the past. In the person of Jesus Christ, God *did* rend the heavens and come down. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He has forgiven your sins and given you the gift of eternal life. He has called you to be His own in Holy Baptism. He has not, and He will not, abandon you. As Isaiah declares, the Lord Jesus surely is the God “who acts for those who wait for Him” (v. 4).

*Lord, open our hearts
and minds to remember
Your saving love, a love
that in Christ reaches
from the past to the present
and into the future. Amen.*

Read Mark 8:31–37

Psalm 40

Losing Your Life to Save It

If anyone would
come after Me,
let him deny himself
and take up his cross
and follow Me.

Mark 8:34

Peter wanted Jesus to avoid crucifixion. Peter wanted glory and success, not self-denial and suffering. We, too, want the Christian life to be all about health, happiness, and prosperity. But Jesus still gives the cross. And that is good.

Jesus won our salvation precisely through His suffering. He could not avoid the cross and still be our Savior. In the same way, we cannot avoid suffering and still follow the Crucified One. We should not be shocked when the wood digs hard into our backs, for in this way we are purged of our love for the passing things of men and our hearts and minds are turned toward the eternal things of God. Since we are baptized into Christ, His death and resurrection is the pattern of our lives. We shall lose our lives in this world, dying with Christ through repentance, in order that we may have real life with Him through forgiveness and faith.

A hymn encourages us with Jesus' promise, "Then let us follow Christ, our Lord, And take the cross appointed And, firmly clinging to His word, In suffering be undaunted. For those who bear the battle's strain The crown of heav'nly life obtain" (LW 379:5).

*Lord Jesus, help me
to cling to Your cross,
that I may also share
in Your resurrection.*

Amen.

Read John 11:17–27
Psalm 116

Where Was the Lord?

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

John 11:21

You can almost hear the accusing questions in Martha’s words. What she really was saying is “Lord, why weren’t You here? What took You so long?

How could You let this happen?” When we experience some sort of catastrophe or loss, those same questions can run through our minds too. “Where were You, God? Why didn’t You stop this?”

Jesus never answers Martha’s questions. Instead, He directs her to the truth of who He is. “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Though we may not understand why things happen the way they do, the reality is that God is at work for us in Christ to rescue us and give us life and resurrection. He labors for us, not simply to give temporary relief from earthly troubles, but to deliver us eternally from all evil. Not even death can conquer the one who trusts in Jesus. He says, “Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). Just as Jesus died and then rose again, so also will all who are baptized into Him. First death, then resurrection—this is the Christian life.

Therefore, we live in hope and confidence, even in trying times. Our Lord leads us through death into life!

Lord, help me to trust that in You there is life even in the midst of death. Amen.

Well Nourished

**I am the vine; you
are the branches.
Whoever abides
in Me and I in him,
he it is that bears
much fruit, for
apart from Me
you can do nothing.**

John 15:5

the branches, and He is the vine. Just as a plant feeds its leaves and flowers, keeping them alive, so Jesus is our source of life. “Apart from Me you can do nothing,” Jesus said.

We certainly never want to be apart from Jesus. But sometimes, even when we do not realize it is happening, our own doubts and fears pull us away from Him. The brightest faith may begin to fade and with it the love and joy that are the fruit of faith. In difficult and fearful times, as at all times, Jesus gives Himself to us to strengthen us. He gives Himself in His Word and by His own life-giving body and blood. In every time of hunger or want, this is the food by which we truly live. As one hymn puts it, “A precious food is this indeed—
It never fails us in our need—
A heav’nly manna for our soul
Until we safely reach our goal”
(*LW* 107:5).

Cut flowers make a beautiful arrangement, but their beauty does not last long. The bright petals and green leaves soon fade and die, because the flowers were cut from the plant that nourished them. We depend on Christ in the same way. We are

*Jesus, our true vine
and source of life,
forgive our fears and
doubts and keep us
close to You. Amen.*

Read Revelation
7:9–17
Psalm 118:1–7

Knowing the End of the Story

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:14

Have you ever been reading a scary book and peeked at the ending? Sometimes, knowing the end of the story helps you get through the scary parts. You know that things will all be all right in the end.

That's what Book of Revelation does: it shows us the end of our story. Our Lord lets us peek at the end of our crooked road through the lens of eternity. At the end of all things, we will be with the Lamb—not in the dirty clothes of our troubles but in the white robes of our Baptism—along with all the faithful people of God in joyous assembly in the presence of God.

Tribulations we have, no doubt about it. They can be distressing, frustrating, irritating, and maddening. But the vision Christ gave St. John gives us strength to endure them faithfully and gracefully. Our hardships and crosses have their day, but they all end in Christ.

Christ shows us where we are going. He reveals the end of our story. The bumps and bruises we collect along the way do not compare with the splendid destination. The One who never leaves us, Jesus Christ, our Lord, is taking us there. To Him be glory forever!

*Lord, I commend myself
into Your care,
my body and soul
and all things. Amen.*

The Cry of Faith

**But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have
hope: The steadfast
love of the LORD
never ceases.**

Lamentations 3:21–22

This chapter of Lamentations has a long list of woes, afflictions, darkness, wasting flesh, bitterness, and tribulation. The writer appears completely lost in his troubles and overwhelmed by his misfortune.

He seems to see no good at all. How easy it is to sympathize with him! In times of darkness, it is difficult to see the light. When tears blur our vision, how can we see the hand of the Lord or know that He is at work?

Yet Lamentations also pulses with confidence and hope. The steadfast love of God keeps faith alive, even in the midst of testing and tribulation. God's promises fortify faith, even in harsh circumstances. Lamentations speaks of repentance and casting oneself on God for mercy, knowing that God is faithful to His Word.

Lamentations has been recognized as giving voice to the sufferings of Christ on the cross. It also gives voice to faith. Christ endured the depths of all sin and darkness, trusting in His heavenly Father, who delivered Him. God is also our Father, and He vindicates His children. He conquers our despair.

Faith cries out in trust to the Lord who promises. We have hope, because we have a faithful heavenly Father.

***Lord, give me hope
in Your mercy
always. Amen.***

Where's Jesus?

And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

Luke 7:13

Sometimes we picture God as far away, secluded up in heaven, distant, and surely not knowing what life is like for us. The words that describe God (majestic, almighty, all-knowing) and the words that describe us (hurt, weak, foolish) only seem to increase the distance.

But Jesus, the God made flesh, is found among us. He is not a faraway God. No. Jesus is right in our midst, even in times of profound human grief and sadness. What's more, He has compassion on us, just as He had for the widow from Nain.

Even more than that, He takes action. Christ isn't some well-meaning man who wrings His hands and wishes things could be better. He is the mighty Lord who made heaven and earth, and He has come to this widow in power. Even death yields to the Lord Christ, who dies for His people. Christ calls the young man back from death and gives him back to his mother. The mighty God gives a mighty wonder for the woman, conquers death, and gives back her son.

All this is a promise for us. We do not have a faraway God but a living Lord. He knows our hurts and will make them right. He is among us and uses His almighty power to save us and wipe away our tears.

*Lord, thank You
for being in the
midst of my life and
never leaving me.
Amen.*

When Anxiety Attacks

**Is not life
more than food,
and the body
more than clothing?**

Matthew 6:25

troubles that threaten life, health, or possessions make worry seem natural. But putting any concerns above a trusting relationship with Jesus surrenders to our fallen natures and results in ever-increasing anxiety.

Jesus walked His talk. Traveling without permanent home, facing temptation, poverty, and death, He gave up everything, including His life, to gain eternity for us. Rather than sitting frozen in panic, He communed with His Father. In prayer, He sought first “the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

Catastrophes put tremendous pressure on our hearts and in our ears, threatening to overwhelm Christ’s words of comfort. Yet we are God’s children through His Son, and the Father promises to give good gifts to His children. He who provides everything the birds and flowers need will also care for us. “He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). Because Christ went through death to life for us, we need not worry. He leads us through our present troubles. Jesus is our confidence.

*Dear Jesus, clothe us
in Your righteousness,
comfort us with Your
peace, and surround us
with Your joy, so we
resist worry and await
in hope Your final
victory. Amen.*

Read Matthew 9:27–38

Psalm 80:1–7

Without a Shepherd?

[Jesus] had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless.

Matthew 9:36

spiritual health—a healing begun here in time but complete only in the resurrection.

In His compassion for us, He came to save us, not only from the harassment of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, but also from the helplessness of disease, poverty, destruction, and death. He lives to shepherd us to our heavenly home.

Even when the weight of the world and the oppression of calamity render us unable to move, to hear His voice clearly, or to follow Him, Christ steps in. He lifts us up and carries us onward in faith. At the same time, He also cares for our broken limbs, broken hearts, broken dreams, and broken lives.

Often (though not always), He also grants healing and relief in this life. Yet even if our pain persists, He even more persistently comforts us. “I have already walked death’s shadowed valley and I will remain with you,” He reminds us.

“Nothing can tear you from My hand. I will shepherd you home.”

Christ’s work, suffering, and death achieved more than the ransom of our souls. He attained our restoration to full physical, mental, and

*In death’s dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me. Amen.*

LW 412:4

Read Matthew 14:22–33

Psalm 124

Weathering the Storm

Take heart; it is I.

Do not be afraid.

Matthew 14:27

When a tornado, flood, or hurricane strikes, we realize that the “storms of life” aren’t just metaphors. Violent winds, raging waters, and flashing lightning humble the strongest person. Lives are lost and possessions are carried away or battered to pieces.

Yet our Savior “walkedst on the foaming deep” (*LSB* 717:2), showing mastery over His creation. He came to His disciples as they battled the storm, showing His concern for His creatures. Even when Peter feared the storm and lost confidence in Christ’s Word, Jesus still had compassion on him and rescued him. And then, when they got in the boat, Christ stilled the storm.

In a storm-tossed world, God promises that we are safe within the ark of Christ’s Church, sheltered from the raging flood that rises without. In dark and stormy nights, above the howling wind and roaring waters, Jesus calms us: “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

We need not walk the waves to come to Him; He comes to us and helps us, granting us calm hearts and peaceful rest even in the most turbulent times.

*O Christ, whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep
And calm amid its rage didst sleep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea. Amen.*

*LSB 717:*2*

Read Matthew 15:21–28

Psalm 63:1–8

A “Crumby” Feast

**Even the dogs eat
the crumbs that
fall from their
masters’ table.**

Matthew 15:27

When we’re dealing with disaster, spending all our energy just coping and surviving, we may forget that we need spiritual as well as physical food. We get so starved that we no longer realize our hunger.

The Canaanite woman hungered for Jesus’ attention, and her poor daughter starved for even a crumb of God’s grace. Though she realized her complete unworthiness, the woman also believed she was begging from a gracious God—the God who wouldn’t disappoint. Although Israel might consider her a “dog,” Christ’s love moved her to ask His aid as one of His lambs.

When we find ourselves drained and depleted, Christ likewise invites us to come to His table. His Word refreshes, His Supper restores, and His love fills our empty hearts and gives us strength to meet the day. The medicine of the Sacrament heals our sin-sick souls. His “crumbs” satisfy. Regardless of our physical trials, He feeds us the food of eternal life.

To the hungry, a morsel makes a meal, and a bite becomes a banquet. When we’re dealing with disaster,

spending all our energy just coping

and surviving, we may forget that we need spiritual as well as physical food. We get so starved that we no longer realize our hunger.

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*O living Bread from heaven,
How well You feed Your guest!
The gifts that You have given
Have filled my heart with rest.*

*Oh, wondrous food of blessing,
Oh, cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
With praises overflows. Amen.*

LW 244:1

Read Mark 4:35–41

Psalm 107:23–32

Storm-Tossed

And He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Mark 4:39

How frightened and frustrated the disciples were! Fighting against disaster at sea, they frantically battled the storm. But they were losing. Meanwhile, Jesus slept.

The disciples thought Jesus would help them: taking in sails, straining on oars, or bailing the boat. When He did nothing they expected, they thought Jesus cared nothing for them, that He didn't care whether they lived or died.

Like the disciples, sometimes we are tempted to believe that Jesus cares nothing for us or our lives. The temptation assails us strongly when He seems to do nothing to help us in the ways we want or expect. Our crises may worsen. Help may do more harm than good, or it may fail to come at all. Doesn't God care that we are perishing?

God's help comes in ways we neither expect or predict. Jesus got up and with a word quieted the wind and the sea, calming the storm's fury and the disciples' fears. He grants endurance through suffering. He gives strength through the cross. He brings life out of death. He is here with us right now, quieting with His Word the storms and fears that frighten us, saying: "Peace! Be still!"

*Jesus, with Your
Word of peace,
calm the storms of
fear that threaten
to overwhelm us.
Amen.*

Only Sleeping

And all were weeping and mourning for her, but [Jesus] said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.”

Luke 8:52

When Jesus announced that Jairus’s daughter was not dead but sleeping, the people listening laughed at Him. This was impossible. They had seen the little girl—they knew she was dead. What Jesus told them, only faith could see, hear, and believe.

Jairus believed that Jesus could help his daughter. The woman who had touched the Savior’s garment believed that Jesus could help her too. Jesus healed the woman, and He took the hand of Jairus’s child and woke her from the sleep of death.

Standing by the sickbed or at the grave of a friend or family member, we may see only illness and the finality of death. What our eyes see alone seems real. But God’s Word proclaims what truly is real.

In His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ conquered death and broke its power over us. Every child of God who dies in faith has merely “fallen asleep” (1 Thessalonians 4:14). On the Last Day, all who have fallen asleep in Christ will be raised to life, hearing that same death-defying command spoken by Jesus to Jairus’s young daughter, “Child, arise” (Luke 8:54).

***Jesus, by Your death
and resurrection
You have conquered death.
Turn our hearts and minds
always to the certain hope
of the resurrection. Amen.***

Read Jeremiah 29:1–14

Psalm 13

An End in Sight

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

When we are hurting it is difficult, if not impossible, to see beyond our immediate circumstances. There seems to be no end in sight to the pain, no light at the end of the tunnel to give us a bit of hope.

When the people of Israel suffered the pain of exile in Babylon and saw no end in sight, God sent them a message of hope through the prophet Jeremiah. At the end of seventy years, the Lord said, He would fulfill His promise and bring His people back home. There was an end in sight after all, in God's sight.

For centuries, God's people waited for the Savior to come. When the time was right, God sent His Son into the world to save us. On the cross, He carried all our grief, sickness, pain, sorrow, and loss. And by His resurrection, He revealed His power to make us whole.

The Lord knows when our pain began, and He knows when He will end it. In Christ, God shows us His love for us right now and gives us the hope of His healing in His time. And then, when the time is right, Christ will return to take us home.

Heavenly Father, the timing and the outcome of this pain are in Your hand and in Your sight. For the sake of Jesus, keep me safe in Your ever-present love. Amen.

Read 1 Corinthians
15:12–26
Psalm 118:14–24

The First of Many

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20

Graveyards also are called cemeteries. The word *cemetery* means “sleeping place.” A cemetery is truly a place of rest from which the bodies of the faithful will awaken from sleep when our Lord returns.

So it is for those who are in Christ. But to the unbelieving, death seems to have the last word. The world mocks the Christian belief in the resurrection. Nevertheless, because Jesus has in fact been raised from the dead, the grave has no power over those who believe in Him. That is why the dead in Christ only sleep.

Christ is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. In other words, He is the first of many more to come. Christians are members of Christ’s body. Where the head goes, the body follows. Christ has risen from the grave, never to die again; so all who belong to Christ shall awaken to life immortal. One hymn says, “We have no cause to mourn or weep; Securely shall this body sleep Till Christ Himself shall death destroy And raise the blessed dead to joy” (*LSB* 759:5).

So do not be dismayed in the face of death. Your faith in Jesus is not futile. Though all people die, all in Christ shall be made alive.

*Lord Jesus,
hasten the day
when the enemy
death is put under
Your feet. Amen.*

The Sting Is Gone

O death, where
is your sting?

1 Corinthians 15:55

There was a boy who was deathly allergic to bee stings. A single sting could stop his breathing and end his life.

One day, the boy and his father were in the family car. Suddenly a bee zipped through the open window. It flew past the terrified boy's head and landed on his shirt. Quickly the father grabbed the bee into the palm of his hand. It stung the father, then buzzed around the car again. The boy was still very afraid. But his father said, "Don't worry. The bee stung me, but it has only one stinger. It can buzz around, but it can't hurt you. Its sting is gone."

What the boy's father did for him is what Jesus has done for us. He took the sting of death and suffered its poison in His body. On the cross, He breathed His last in our place. Then He rose to life again to show that death's poison had been spent. Its sting is gone.

Calamity and disaster can sweep so much away that it seems as though death and decay are all there is. They buzz about us in this world, trying to scare us to hell. But they can't hurt those who trust in Christ. Death's sting is gone. All its poison was spent on Jesus, and yet He lives! And because He lives, we shall live also.

*Thanks be to You,
O God, for giving
us the victory over
death through our
Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Unexpected Deliverance

**And you, child,
will be called
the prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go
before the Lord to
prepare His ways.**

Luke 1:76

Israel waited for centuries for God to remember His promises and deliver it from its enemies. But when the deliverance came, it came in a way they might not have expected. Zechariah gave thanks for the birth of his son, John, who would grow up to be the prophet who announced the arrival of the Savior. The Savior that John proclaimed also came as a baby, the Christ Child of Bethlehem. He would grow up to save us all—not from earthly enemies, but from sin and death—through His death on the cross.

God does the most extraordinary things in the most ordinary ways. John, the child born to aging parents, grew up to be a prophet. Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem, grew up to be the Redeemer of the world. The extraordinary story of our salvation is told in ordinary words on paper. Our Redeemer's body and blood are fed to us in everyday bread and wine.

As we look to God for help in trials and difficult times, He reminds us that He often works in ways we do not expect. Because God does extraordinary things in the most ordinary ways, we wait on Him in hope.

***Father, in the extraordinary
gift of Your Son, You show us
that Your ways are not our ways.
Strengthen us to trust Your work
and promises. Amen.***

Read Luke 4:14–21

Psalm 145:8–21

God Has His Eye on the Poor

[The Lord] has
anointed Me to
proclaim good
news to the poor.

Luke 4:18

Many promises in the Scriptures address the poor. The Psalms speak of God's care for the poor. Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount calls the poor blessed. Today, God's Word proclaims that Christ is sent to preach the Gospel "to the poor."

But what if I am not poor? What if I am not in poverty, but am struggling with grief or loss or sickness or disaster? Does God still have regard for me?

Let's understand what being poor in the Bible means most often. While it may indicate the lack of financial resources, *poor* mostly means having no other option but God. It means that our only hope, our only resource, is God. The poor know that all we have in this life is our God. Sometimes life hits us hard, and suddenly we are shown our poverty. Our pain, grief, and losses force us to see that we really have nothing in ourselves. We are poor. Facing this can be anguishing.

Jesus comes to poor people like us with good news: "I have you in My divine hands. My hands have bled for you. My hands will uphold you." Yes, we have nothing but Jesus, but with Jesus we have all things. We are poor, but rich in the mercy and grace of our Savior. He has come to forgive, heal, and restore us.

*Lord, though I am
poor and lowly,
give me Your rich
mercy. Amen.*

Successful Crucifixion

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:27

you is by the blessings of happiness, financial security, and the like. What, then, when all these are stripped away?

Some preachers on television and in popular books suggest that the Christian life is marked by success. They say the way you can tell that God is with

Jesus talks differently. He says the marks of the Christian life are the crosses we bear. Jesus tells us that as He suffered, so will we. Jesus says suffering is part of the Christian life.

Crosses are not fun. They hurt. Our crosses remind us of our mortality and our unworthiness. They show us the failure of every false refuge, so that we cling to His mercy ever more tightly. Crosses show us that we really have only one hope in this life: Jesus and His never-failing love for us.

But the crosses in our life do more. They remind us that we belong to Christ, our crucified Lord. We follow and imitate a crucified Savior, who leads the way to life and glory through suffering and death.

Does suffering mean that the world is evil and has broken God's control? No! Suffering marks those who belong to Jesus, the Lord who leads us on the way of the cross, which is the way of eternal rest and peace.

*Lord, keep me
faithful while
on the path
of the cross. Amen.*

Read John 5:19–24

Psalm 66

Life for the Dead

**For as the Father
raises the dead and
gives them life,
so also the Son gives
life to whom He will.**

John 5:21

I remember one professor in college who told his unprepared students, “Get your act together and then come back to see me!” He could really frighten us.

At times we may think God requires us to get our act together before we can approach Him. But our lives are so messy. Sinful forces in us and beyond us wreck our days and nights. Everything in life seems confused and disordered. How can God accept me, we may think, when I have nothing to offer or show Him but sadness, confusion, and sin?

But God is not like my college professor. He does not demand from us; He gives to us. The disorder in our lives shows us our inability to help ourselves, but Christ offers and bestows His life and promise.

God raises the dead to life. What can the dead offer to God? Can a corpse arrange things nicely? What can the dead do to get God’s attention? God gives life to the lowly, the sinners, and the confused. The true objects of God’s mercy and power are those who have nothing to offer to Him, like sinners at the font of Baptism, like empty sinners yearning for a word of God’s kindness, like open hands at the Lord’s Supper. God raises, forgives, and fills all such needs.

*Living Lord,
give me Your life
always. Amen.*

More Than Ownership

**I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays
down His life for the
sheep.**

John 10:11

Jesus contrasts His care as shepherd of the sheep with the work of a hired hand.

The hired worker has no sense of ownership for the flock. When

a wolf attacks the sheep, he runs away, thinking only of his own safety and leaving the sheep in danger. In contrast, Jesus describes Himself as the *Good Shepherd*. With a love for His sheep that goes far beyond mere ownership, He lays down His life for the flock. When danger threatens, the Good Shepherd thinks only of protecting His sheep.

This is the wonderful love that Jesus has for us, His sheep. As the Good Shepherd, He knows His flock very well. He understands our fears, doubts, and grief, and He carefully keeps watch over us. When we face physical danger, emotional turmoil, or spiritual threats such as temptation or guilt, Jesus our Shepherd does not run or hide. Instead, He squarely faces our foes and defends us.

Our Good Shepherd loves us so much that He gave His life to deliver us from sin, death, the devil, and every other evil that threatens to tear us from Him. Now He lives to give us His life. With love so great, He shows us that He will never turn away from us in any time of need.

***Jesus, Good Shepherd,
keep watch over us and
hold us safely in Your
protecting hand. Amen.***

Read John 12:23–26

Psalm 115

Unusual Glory

And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

John 12:23

Talk about odd opposites and unusual outcomes! A grain of wheat dies, yet bears much fruit. To love life is to lose it; to hate life in the world is to keep life for eternity. The time for Jesus’ glory comes, but His glory is the strange glory of His crucifixion and death. How can any of this be glory?

Jesus’ glory and power were seen in His death because, by His death, He defeated death and the devil for us. Like the buried grain of wheat producing a new crop, His death would bear fruit in our salvation. He willingly forfeited His life in the world to gain eternal life for us.

In the Lord’s Prayer we ask God to “deliver us from evil.” As we pray these words, we may be thinking of spiritual evil or of physical illness and loss. Yet we do not know when our prayer will be answered or how God will deliver us. Deliverance may come suddenly, but it may be long in coming. Like the opposites of which Jesus speaks, deliverance may come in a way we do not expect or immediately understand. Yet God already delivered us from the greatest evil, eternal death—a deliverance that came by way of suffering and a cross.

Father in heaven, hear our prayer and deliver us from evil, for the sake of Jesus, who defeated death for us. Amen.

Contentment

I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:12–13

We usually associate contentment with enjoying a big meal, a family celebration, or a restful vacation. But St. Paul found contentment in far more improbable circumstances: in hard work and sleep-

less nights, in beatings and stonings, in shipwrecks and threats from robbers, and in hunger and thirst (2 Corinthians 11). Whether enjoying plenty or going hungry, whether in abundance or need, Paul had learned the secret of contentment.

Paul eagerly shares the marvelous secret. In all circumstances, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” He had learned that Jesus Christ supplies the help and strength we need. Because strength comes from the Lord, trust in ourselves and trust in others leads to disappointment and discontent. But the Lord is faithful; He alone is trustworthy. Whatever He gives is enough.

Of course, other Christians had helped Paul. Christ had met their needs and was working through them to supply the help that Paul needed. And the same promise is given to us, that in Christ “God will supply every need of yours” (Philippians 4:19).

Father, give us the help and strength that we need so that we, in turn, may help and strengthen others. Amen.

Read 1 Thessalonians
1:2–10
Psalm 102:1–22

The Long Wait

Wait for [God's] Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to wait—waiting to see if our loved ones are okay, waiting for help to arrive and our lives to be rebuilt, waiting for the doctor to come and tell us if we need treatment or surgery, or waiting to die. While we wait, time seems to move so slowly, and our minds tend to dwell on what is disheartening or on the worst-case scenario.

God sets our minds elsewhere. He sets our minds on His Son sent from heaven. Jesus rescues us, not only amid earthly suffering and trials, but also from the coming wrath. Jesus Himself was afflicted for us, suffering the very wrath of God against our sin to deliver us from it. Now our mighty Redeemer has risen from the dead. He will come again on the Last Day to rescue us from every evil of body and soul forever.

This same Lord gives us patience to wait. Be of good courage, because He strengthens your heart. As St. Paul says, “We know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4). You belong to Him through Baptism and the Word. The Lord will never forsake you. His promises are sure. Those who wait on Him will not be disappointed.

Lord, grant me patience to endure and to wait on You. Amen.

Serene Hearts

**Peace I leave with you;
My peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives
do I give to you.**

John 14:27

In this fallen and cursed world, peace never lasts for long. More often than not, peace is only the calm before the next storm, the lull before the next round of conflict, the diplomatic pause before the next war. That's the best this world can give, because it never addresses the root cause of strife and hostility, which is sin.

The peace of Jesus is different. He went to the root cause and purchased forgiveness of sin by His death. Christ made true peace between God and man. Christ is the real and everlasting reconciliation between us and our God. His peace surpasses all understanding, even in the midst of outward turmoil.

As He told His disciples, Jesus was returning to His Father, but He was not leaving them as orphans. He gave them and us His Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings to remembrance Jesus' work and words. Jesus ascended to the Father to be everywhere, as the Father is. But Jesus also gave us the Spirit, who gives Jesus to us personally. In Baptism, God adopts us as His children, so He is our Father and Christ is our Brother. Jesus comes to us, calms our troubled hearts, and gives us His abiding peace.

*Prince of Peace,
grant me to keep
and hold onto Your
words, that my
heart may be set
at peace. Amen.*

Read Nehemiah
1:4–11b
Psalm 130

Redeemed from Tragedy

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days.

Nehemiah 1:4

Nehemiah wept when he heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and its gates were burned with fire. He knew only too well that this occurred as a result of the sins of the children of Israel. This is what the Lord had said would happen if they acted corruptly and did not keep His commandments. Nehemiah repented and prayed for the Lord's help.

When tragedy or calamity strikes us—as a nation or as individuals—the Lord intends to bring us to repentance through such events. These awful events remind us that we are lost without His mercy. We constantly need the Lord's protection and deliverance.

Yet God declares that His ears are open to our prayers. While adversity drives us to repentance, His loving-kindness draws us to trust Him. His faithfulness leads us to come to Him for the mercy He promises.

And He is faithful to His Word. Though misfortune may scatter and bring disarray, the Lord Jesus gathers again to Himself all who trust His holy name, the name given to us in Holy Baptism. He has redeemed us from our sins by His strong hand, the hand that bears the mark of the nail for us. By His wounds we are healed, and by His life we are restored.

***O God, though we
are undeserving,
have mercy on us
for Jesus' sake. Amen.***

Our Advocate

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:1

He is like the prosecuting attorney in a trial whose airtight case nails us. Especially in times of trouble, Satan's accusations ring loudly in our ears, and we tremble before the throne of God.

We would be entirely without hope were it not for our Advocate who defends us before God the Father. Jesus wins our acquittal. He, the Righteous One, points out that our sins belong to Him and are no longer ours. Moreover, on the cross, He has already served the sentence for every sin. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, Satan has been thrown down, and we have been set free. We are released and set at liberty.

Because Jesus is our Advocate and Defender, we need not try to justify ourselves. We already are justified in Christ. Therefore, God has freed us to confess our sins honestly, promising us His full and free forgiveness in Christ, who defends us. As He has promised, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The name *Satan* means "accuser," and that's what the devil does. He accuses us of our sins day and night before God.

He is like the prosecuting attorney

Lord Jesus, help me always to rely on You, my only Advocate and strong Defender. Amen.

Read Luke 15:11–32

Psalm 103

Our Father's Open Arms

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

Luke 15:20

When we sinners hit rock bottom, we fear that God won't take us back or that we have to earn back the Father's love. Like the prodigal son, we plan to strike a deal with God. Aware that we don't deserve a place in the family, we plan to tell our Father to treat us like hired servants. Though the prodigal rightly confesses his sin, he doesn't yet grasp the depth of his father's love.

Notice what the father does: He runs and embraces his son *before the son can even say a word*. The father's love does not depend on his son's confession or anything else his son does. God takes us back too—not because of how sincerely we've repented or because we've decided to change. He takes us back because of His own unmerited love for us revealed in Jesus.

We are welcomed home solely because Christ also left His Father, coming down to earth to consort with tax collectors and prostitutes and the likes of us. He bore their sin and ours on the cross. He then rose and ascended to His Father's side and will someday come again to bring us home to the Father. Through Christ the Son, we are fully restored to being children of God. That's something to celebrate!

*Heavenly Father,
help me believe
that Your love
for me in Christ
is unconditional.
Amen.*

1. By One Who Is Bereaved

Dearest Father, death has robbed me of one I love. Your promise of the resurrection gives me hope, but my heart is torn and my spirit is empty as the dearest memories now bring the deepest pain. I need Your peace. Give me the strength that sustained You in the death of Your Son, that I might have strength for my days, purpose in my calling, and comfort in my affliction. Remind me anew that my loved one who died in Christ is not lost forever, but gathered safely to You, until our joyous reunion on the Last Day; through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son. Amen.

2. By One Who Has Lost a Home

O Lord, my eternal Dwelling Place, my house in this world is gone. Gone is the earthly security of my own roof above my head and my own walls surrounding me. Loss of my possessions means loss of reminders and keepsakes of my past, and I ache from being so uprooted. Give me shelter and protection for my body. Comfort me by Your dear Son, who Himself knew the pains and perils of homelessness, that my confidence may rest in the shelter He is for me. If it be Your will, let my house and home be rebuilt. If that is not Your will, let me be content; to the glory of Your name. Amen.

3. By One Who Has Lost Daily Work

O Lord, You instituted honest labor at creation's dawn, You blessed Noah in constructing the ark, You guided Moses in leading Israel to freedom, and You made a craftsman the earthly guardian of Your dear Son. Help me as I struggle with joblessness, financial worries, and the loss of purpose in my life. Restore me speedily to gainful employment, I pray, so that I might honor You anew in my vocation. Until then, let not false pride keep me from accepting the assistance of others, but rather receive their ministrations with thanksgiving; in Jesus' name. Amen.

4. By One Who Is Sick

Lord Jesus, You know that I do not want to be sick. When You lived on earth, You healed the people who came to You for help. Graciously hear and answer my prayer, and restore me to health and strength. Let Your will be done in my life, and make my faith strong. Through the Word of Christ, who bore my sickness for me, teach me to be patient and to trust in You in all circumstances. Throughout this illness, help me witness to Your love and saving power, so that others may come to know Your healing grace; in Jesus' name. Amen.

5. By One Who Is Injured

Heavenly Father, for reasons I do not understand, You have allowed this injury, this hurt, to be part of my life right now. If it is Your will, please bring healing quickly to me. If it be Your will that healing is a long time in coming, then give me patience and strength to trust You and Your timing. Help me follow carefully all that doctors tell me to help my physical healing. Keep me mindful of my Lord Jesus, who was wounded for my sake. I pray in His name, whose injuries brought me the healing power of Your forgiveness. Amen.

6. By One Who Is Lonely

Dear Jesus, I am so afraid when I am alone. It feels as though there is no one with whom I can share my thoughts, hopes, and fears. But You promise You are always with me; therefore, I am never really alone. So when I am especially lonely, as I am right now, turn my thoughts to Your promises, that they may comfort me. On the cross, You carried all our burdens alone. Lead me to consign my burdens to You in prayer and to talk to You about my fears. Give me the strength found in Your holy Word, and help me find fellowship among my brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

7. For Missing Loved Ones

Father in heaven, Your eyes see into every corner of the earth. We pray for our loved ones who are missing. We fear for their safety, yet we know all things are in Your mighty and merciful hands. Graciously be with, guide, guard, strengthen, and protect those who are separated from us. Care for their every need of body and soul. If it be Your will, reunite us with those whom we love. Be with us in mercy, together with all others who also suffer uncertainty or grief. We commend all our loved ones and ourselves into Your loving care, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

8. For Daily Bread

Father in heaven, You created the heavens and the earth. You made us and all creatures. In Your mercy, provide us what we need for this day. Grant us daily bread, water, health, clothing, shelter, medicine, and whatever else You see we need. Let us be content with these tokens of Your steadfast love. You are our loving God, and for us You did not withhold Your only Son. In that same love, do not forsake us, but guard and protect us. Guide our hearts and minds so that we may see Your hand in the daily blessings You give us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

9. For Protection from Evil

Dear God, You sent Your Son to battle Satan and evil. He faced Satan in the desert and in His ministry. In His Passion and resurrection, He gave His life to conquer them and their power. Fight for us now in our battle with evil. Protect us daily from the assaults of evil, sin, the devil, and this fallen world, especially in these days when so much is in chaos and turmoil. You are our only hope. Grant us courage to face each day, knowing that the cross of Christ goes before us and Your holy angels protect us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

10. For Daily Guidance

Lord God in heaven, unless You keep us in the paths of Your wisdom, we go astray. We face so many temptations and dangers. Anchor our hearts in the knowledge of Christ and His atoning love. Fasten our feet to walk in His steps every day. Root our days and nights in the reality of our Baptism. Grant us wisdom and courage to follow the path You have shown to us in Your Word. Equip and embolden us to reach out in compassion to the needy and in faithfulness to the lost; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

11. For Favorable Weather

God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the clouds, winds, and seas do Your bidding. Though we are unworthy of Your goodness, we pray You would show us favor and grant us good weather. Guard us from extremes of drought and flood, heat and cold. Protect us from damaging storms. Give rain and sun in suitable measure so that the earth may produce richly and bountifully the food and other material things we need for this life. Cause us to be truly thankful, acknowledging You as the source of every good and perfect gift; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

12. For Rescue from All Calamity

Lord Jesus, You taught us to pray, “Deliver us from evil.” Therefore, we humbly beg You to rescue us from every evil of body and soul. Since this world is under the curse of sin, we are always in danger of calamity from fire and water, war and violence, scarcity and famine, pest and disease. Since You bore the curse of sin for us on the cross, defend us against these dangers. When we suffer calamity, let not our faith in You falter, but draw us ever closer to You. Help us endure unto the end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Yourself in heaven. Amen.

13. By One Facing Surgery

Heavenly Father, You counsel me, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Still, I am afraid of going under anesthesia, afraid things will not go well, and afraid of the pain. By Your Word and Spirit, calm my fears. Help me trust that, awake or asleep, I am Yours. You chose me in Holy Baptism and redeemed me by the blood of Christ, so nothing can separate me from Your love. Guide the doctors, surgeons, nurses, and technicians, that their hands may be Yours to heal and restore me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

14. For the Dying

Gracious Father, through Your Spirit You are the Lord and giver of life. Show mercy to those who are near death. Help them firmly trust that by His death Christ has destroyed the power of death, and by His resurrection He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Take away the terror of death, and give them the unending peace of Christ. Ease the pain of those who are dying, and grant them a blessed end, that having already died with Christ in Holy Baptism, they now may look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

15. Thanksgiving for Blessings Received

Heavenly Father, thank You for the blessings You have given to me, especially for _____. I know that I do not deserve Your goodness, but You have given me all that I need for this earthly life out of Your own love and mercy. And You have given me the far greater gifts of forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ. You have made me Your own child in Baptism; You have strengthened my faith through the blessings of Holy Communion and the gift of Your Word. For the sake of Jesus, be pleased now to accept my humble gratitude and praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

16. For Patience under Trial and Cross

I tremble, O Lord, with the very thought of comparing my trials with those You underwent on my behalf. Yet, just as You have called me to take up my cross and follow You, You also bid me to lay my burdens on You. You know the weight that oppresses me, and I pray You would carry me through these troubling times that I might know Your peace. Grant me patience as troubles persist, faith that through You I have already more than conquered, confidence that these times will pass in Your own good time, and expectant joy that I will live with You forever. Amen.

17. For Compassion

Heavenly Father, as we see others in need, remind us, Your Church and people, of our own trials in days gone by. Bring to our minds the ways You have helped us in our trials, so that we may be equipped to encourage those who now are afflicted. Open our eyes to see others' needs, our hearts to feel their pains, our spirits to desire to help, our minds to find ways to help, and our emotions to be sensitive in reaching out in Your love. Give us, we pray, compassion to comfort others with the comfort You have given us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

18. For Comfort

Dearest Jesus, during these trials, nothing of this life fits me and nothing of me fits into this life. Others seem so content and carefree, while I find no comfort. Others try to help me, but no one understands my needs, my anxieties, or my continual heartache. Only You know the depths into which I have plunged; only You can reach me, sustain me, and lift me up. I pray that You, who forsook comfort for the cross, would not forsake me, but would gather me to Yourself and hold me fast, that I may know Your lasting comfort and peace. Amen.

19. For Strength

Lord Jesus, You came to earth as a helpless child, setting aside the fullness of Your power to redeem frail humanity. You know the weakness of our mortal flesh through Your own suffering and death. My afflictions drain me of energy and empty me of enthusiasm. According to Your Word, perfect Your power in my weakness, support me in Your mighty arms, and grant me strength to follow where You lead and to live according to Your Father's will; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. Amen.

20. For Protection from Despair

Heavenly Father, God of hope, protect me from all thoughts of hopelessness and despair. So much has gone wrong in my life, help seems so far off, and it seems that no one has time or interest to aid me. Open my eyes to see Your never-failing love in Jesus Christ. Place before me the suffering and death of Christ for me, that I may always know that You love me beyond measure. In every darkness and difficulty, help me trust You and Your promises, that I may live in hope. Create in me a clean heart and a willing spirit to sustain me; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

21. For Preservation in the Faith

Lord God, heavenly Father, You have searched me and You know me. Before a word is on my tongue, You know it completely. Thank You for granting me faith in Your Son, Jesus Christ, and making me Your baptized child. Preserve me in faith even though sin, Satan, and difficult circumstances try to tear it from me. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, root me always in Your holy Word, that by Your grace I may know and trust my Savior's mercy and believe that You will never forsake me or leave me; through the same Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

22. For Forgiveness

O Lord, I confess that I have sinned against You and against others by the things I have done and thought and said. If You were to judge me according to my works and my motives, I would be condemned eternally. But You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. For the sake of Jesus' death and resurrection, forgive me. By His precious blood, cleanse me of my sin. Help me believe that my sins were fully paid for on Good Friday, that Jesus took my place and suffered my punishment on the cross to set me free. For His sake, have mercy on me. Amen.

23. For Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, amid a world full of tribulation, You encourage us, saying, “Take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Thank You that Your peace is not the shallow, short-lived peace the world gives. By Your holy cross, You reconciled us forever to the Father, giving us the peace that passes understanding, the deep and lasting rest of sins forgiven. Grant us to know Your peace, even in the midst of troubles. Cause enmity among peoples to cease. By Your Spirit, grant that, as far as it depends on us, we may live peaceably with all. Amen.

24. For Deliverance from Anxiety

Heavenly Father, many times in Your Word You warn us against worry and fear: “Do not be anxious about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34); “Do not be anxious about anything” (Philippians 4:6). You have promised to help and comfort us. But right now that very anxiety makes it hard to remember and trust Your promises. By Your Holy Word and Spirit, strengthen our faith and take away our anxiety. Turn our hearts and minds toward Your promises, and help us remember that nothing can separate us from the love You have for us in Christ Jesus. Hear our prayer for His sake. Amen.

25. For Public Safety Officers

Dear Lord Jesus, in this fallen world, distinctive dangers await those whom You have called to be police officers and firefighters. Wicked people challenge them, and evil circumstances await them; yet, by Your call, they willingly serve the public good and exercise Your providence among us. Grant them safety and diligence in the performance of their duties. Protect them from the various hazards and temptations particular to their vocations. Create or sustain faith in You as their Savior among them, keeping them secure unto life everlasting. Amen.

26. For Health Care Workers

O great Physician of soul and body, You work through earthly means to bring Your blessings to the people of this world. As by plain water and simple bread and wine You bring us Your great spiritual blessings, so also by the men and women serving in the health care professions You extend Your healing to those in need. Bless doctors, nurses, and all whom You call to vocations in the healing arts. Keep their skills, vigilance, and compassion sharp and sensitive, that they might serve You by serving those who are ill or injured in body or mind; for Your name's sake. Amen.

27. For Relief Organizations and Their Workers

Merciful Father, thank You for all the men and women whom You have called and sent to give help, hope, healing, and relief to those who suffer in times of need. Strengthen those who work to heal the sick, tend the injured, feed the hungry, help the homeless, and comfort the hurting. Encourage those who encourage the suffering and grieving. Give them strength to meet each day of service. Uphold them in their work. Further their efforts, that those whom You have created may know Your loving care; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

28. For Those Who Work to Restore Public Services

Lord God, You have created all things and have given us blessings such as roads, clean water, and electricity. Thank You for those You provide to restore these blessings to us and our community. Many of them have traveled long distances to help us in our time of need; protect them in their travels and keep their own homes and families safe. Bless their work, that order and public services might soon be restored to our communities. Protect these workers in any danger they might face, and help them see that the work they do is Yours; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

29. For Government Officials

Lord of heaven and earth, You have chosen to rule over Your creation through the governments You have established on earth. Give the elected officials of our country the wisdom to make decisions that will bring peace and safety to every citizen. Guide state and local leaders in their daily work, and create in their hearts an attitude of loving care for the people they serve. Protect our leaders from harm and temptation. Especially in these trying times, give them the courage and confidence they need to solve the problems we face today and to plan for the future. Amen.

30. For Guardsmen and Soldiers

Heavenly Father, send Your holy angels to guard and protect the men and women in the armed forces who guard and protect us. Watch over their families, especially when their loved ones serve far from home. Give all guardsmen and soldiers, especially those called to serve us in this time of disaster and loss, courage in the face of danger, comfort when they are lonely, and patience to carry out their duties faithfully. Through the ministry of chaplains, family, and friends, touch their lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for them. Amen.

31. For Pilots

Father, ruler over heaven and earth, in these days extend Your protection over the pilots and their crews who bring travelers safely to their destinations, especially those who labor to carry the sick and injured to safety, to bring supplies to the stranded, and to bring public servants to the place where they are needed. Give them alertness and strength for their work in the air. Fill them with calm confidence for the many quick decisions they must make. Bless the ground crews and air-traffic controllers on whom the pilots, crew, and passengers depend. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

32. For Pastors and Chaplains

Holy Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, the Good Pastor who laid down Your life for Your sheep. Grant faithfulness to those whom You have called and ordained to be pastors and chaplains and whom You have sent to care for us who suffer from the calamity that has come upon us. Equip them by Your Word and Holy Spirit, that they may comfort the hurting, grieving, suffering, and lonely with Your holy consolation. Give them compassion for the sheep, declaring and bestowing Your mercy to poor sinners, and leading others on the path of righteousness for Your name's sake. Amen.

33. In Time of National Crisis or Calamity

Heavenly Father, King of creation and Ruler of the nations, in this time of national crisis, come to the aid of our country and her people. To the dying, grant peace in Jesus; to the grieving, provide comfort in His name; to the sick or wounded, bestow healing; to the worried and confused, give trust in Your mighty and merciful hand. Guide our leaders and public servants, that all would work wisely toward the common good and welfare. Grant us to look to You for peace and guidance, and give us the peace that passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

34. In Time of Natural Disaster

Have mercy, most merciful Lord, on all those who suffer in this time of disaster. In Your mercy and according to Your will, supply their physical needs, give them hope and comfort in the midst of their distress, and grant them faith in the One who suffered for us, Jesus Christ. Guide, equip, and strengthen all who work to bring healing and relief. Swiftly restore civil order and peace. Use this time and these events to humble us before You, to lead us to repent of our sin, and to seek Your mercy and love, which never fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

35. In Time of Storms

Lord Jesus, while You lived on earth You showed Your power over storms, sea, and wind. When Your disciples called to You for help, You spoke Your word of peace into the storm. Help us now in the face of this frightening storm. Speak Your word of peace into the storm and, most of all, into our hearts. Restrain this storm's fury, and keep our lives and homes safe. Give us patience and courage to endure this season, trusting in Your mercy. Protect all police officers, fire-fighters, guardsmen, and aid workers who help others during this time of danger. In Your name we pray. Amen.

36. In Time of Severe Drought

Father, Scripture speaks of snow and mist obeying Your command. Your Word, which accomplishes the purpose for which You send it, is like the rain that refreshes the earth. In these days of drought, crops suffer, farmers face financial harm, fire danger increases, and all creation thirsts. While our food withers, we ourselves are tempted to doubt Your loving care for us. Send us the rain we need so badly during this dry season. Just as Your Word refreshes our hearts and gives us hope, let the rain come to renew the land and bring life. Hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

37. In Time of Epidemic

Almighty and merciful God, although You have allowed this disease to break out among us, we confess that our sins merit even worse afflictions. Have mercy on us, for You gave Your Son to bear our sicknesses and sorrows. For the sake of Jesus' anguish on the cross, be gracious to us. If it be Your will, grant health and strength to all who are ill and whose lives are threatened. Comfort the bereaved. Give wisdom and skill to those in the medical profession and to all who are in authority, that this epidemic may be ended swiftly; through Jesus, our Great Physician. Amen.

38. In Time of Famine

Heavenly Father, You cause Your sun to rise on the evil and the good and send rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For the sake of Jesus, who hungered in the wilderness for us and reconciled the world to You, show mercy to those who now suffer from famine and hunger. Provide for their needs and preserve their lives. Bring forth the fruits of the earth. Hinder those who would take advantage of the needy. Prompt Your Church to be generous in giving help. Cause all people to hunger for Christ, the bread of life, that believing in Him they may live forever. Amen.

39. In Time of War

Almighty God, since the days of Cain and Abel, strife and bloodshed have been among men. Because of our sin, this war has come upon us. Grant us repentant hearts that seek You, for You loved Your enemies and gave Your Son to die for us while we were yet sinners. Defend us against our adversaries. Give success to every just cause. Give wisdom to our leaders and courage and loyalty to our armed forces. If it be Your will, bring this conflict to a speedy end, that suffering and bloodshed may cease, and that we may lead quiet, peaceable, godly, and reverent lives. Amen.

40. On a Day of Humiliation and Prayer

O God, have pity on us poor, miserable sinners. We have no merits of our own to bring into Your presence. This land, this Church, and this people deserve nothing but wrath because of our misdeeds, our weak faith, and our shallow service to our fellowman. Cover our many sins by Your great mercy, for the sake of Your Son, Jesus, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death for us and who gave His righteousness to us. Cleanse us by His blood, renew us by His Spirit, and guide us by His Word, that we may humbly trust Your mercy and seek to do Your will. Amen.

Old Testament

Isaiah 25:6–9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

Job 19:23–27

Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Psalm 4:1–3, 8

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for Himself; the LORD hears when I call to Him. . . . In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 6

O LORD, rebuke me not in Your anger, nor discipline me in Your wrath. Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But You, O LORD—how long? Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of Your steadfast love. For in death there is no remembrance of You; in Sheol who will give You praise? I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes. Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping. The LORD had heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.

Psalm 13

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in Your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 27:1, 3-14

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple. For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble; He will conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, "Seek My face." My heart says to You, "Your face, LORD, do I seek." Hide not Your face from me. Turn not Your servant away in anger, O You who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in. Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; He utters His voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come, behold the works of the LORD, how He has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; He burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of Your righteousness. O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise. For You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD! O Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

New Testament

1 Corinthians 15:51–52, 54–57

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable. . . . Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Ephesians 2:8–9

By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

John 5:24

[Jesus said to them,] “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

John 11:17–27

Now when Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews

had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

John 14:1-6

[Jesus said to His disciples,] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Matthew 11:28–30

[At that time Jesus declared,] “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

1 Peter 1:3–7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while . . . you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith . . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16–17

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Romans 5:1–8

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:1–5

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

Romans 8:1, 31–35, 37–39

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. . . . What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 14:7–9

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.

Titus 3:4–8a

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A mighty fortress is our
God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free
from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours
can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights
the valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world
should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no
ill,
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still
shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side
upon the plain
With His good gifts
and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours
remaineth.

LW 298

All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night

All praise to Thee, my God, this night
For all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
The ill that I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.
Teach me to die that so I may
Rise glorious at the awesome day.

When in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heav'nly thoughts supply;
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
No pow'rs of darkness me molest.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

LW 484:1–3, 5–6

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

I know that my Redeemer lives!
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living head!

He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save;
He lives exalted, throned above;
He lives to rule His Church in love.

He lives to bless me with His love;
He lives to plead for me above;
He lives my hungry soul to feed;
He lives to help in time of need.

He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to His name!
He lives, my Savior, still the same;
What joy this blest assurance gives:
I know that my Redeemer lives!

LW 264:1–2, 5, 7–8

I Leave All Things to God's Direction

I leave all things to God's direction,
For He loves me in wealth or woe;
His will is good, and His affection,
His tender love is true, I know.
My strength, my fortress rock is He:
What pleases God, that pleases me.

My God has all things in His keeping,
He is my ever faithful friend;
He gives me laughter after weeping,
And all His ways in blessing end.
His love endures eternally:
What pleases God, that pleases me.

The will of God shall be my pleasure
While here I live life's interim;
My will is wrong beyond all measure,
It does not will what pleases Him.
The Christian's motto then must be:
What pleases God, that pleases me.

God knows what must be done to save me,
His love for me will never cease;
And all my sins my Lord forgave me
With purest gold of loving grace.
His will supreme must ever be:
What pleases God, that pleases me.

My God desires each soul's salvation,
My soul He too desires to save;
Therefore with Christian resignation
All earthly troubles I will brave.
His will be done eternally:
What pleases God, that pleases me.

Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won

Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won!
Death no longer can appall me;
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done!
From the grave will Christ recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! To Him the throne
There above all things is given.
I shall go where He is gone,
Live and reign with Him in heaven.
God is faithful; doubtings, hence!
This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And I am sure
Neither life nor death shall sever
Me from Him. I shall endure
In His love, through death, forever.
God will be my sure defense;
This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And now is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath
When I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
Jesus is my confidence!

LW 139:1-2, 4-5

Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Blest redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above:
Often have Your eyes, offended,
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;
Yet upon the cross extended,
You have borne the pain of all.

LW 90:1

Let Me Be Yours Forever

Let me be Yours forever,
My gracious God and Lord;
May I forsake You never
Nor wander from Your Word.
Preserve me from the mazes
Of error and distrust,
And I shall sing Your praises
Forever with the just.

LW 257:1

Lord Jesus Christ, Will You Not Stay

Lord Jesus Christ, will You not stay?
It is now toward the end of day.
Oh, let Your Word, that saving light,
Shine forth undimmed into the night.

Rekindle for this end-time stress
Faith's ancient strength and steadfastness
That we keep pure till life is spent
Your holy Word and Sacrament.

To hope grown dim, To hearts turned cold
Speak tongues of fire and make us bold
To shine Your Word of saving grace
Into each dark and loveless place.

Restrain, O Lord, the human pride
That seeks to thrust Your truth aside
Or with some man-made thoughts or things
Would dim the words Your Spirit sings.

The cause is Yours, the glory too.
Then hear us, Lord, and keep us true,
Your Word alone our heart's defense,
The Church's glorious confidence.

LW 344:1–3, 5–6

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

LSB 655

Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Lord, let at last Thine angels come,
To Abram's bosom bear me home,
That I may die unfearing;
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until Thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
That these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, My prayer attend,
 my prayer attend,
And I will praise Thee without end.

TLH 429:3

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Sustain me in the raging flood;
When all supports are washed away,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

LW 368

Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us
And keep us in His grace
And guide us when perplexed
And free us from all harm
In this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heav'n adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

LW 443

Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion

Oh, how great is Your compassion,
Faithful Father, God of grace,
That with all our fallen race
In our depth of degradation
You had mercy so that we
Might be saved eternally!

Your great love for this has striven
That we may, from sin made free,
Live with You eternally.
Your dear Son Himself has given
And extends His gracious call,
To His supper leads us all.

Firmly to our soul's salvation
Witnesses Your Spirit, Lord,
In Your Sacraments and Word.
There He sends true consolation,
Giving us the gift of faith
That we fear not hell nor death.

LSB 559:1–3

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:

Under the shadow of Your throne
Your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Your arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
Or earth received its frame,
From everlasting You are God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Your sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Still be our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home!

LW 180:1–4, 6

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be for sin the double cure:
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

LW 361

Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
This is Christ, by man rejected;
Here, my soul, your Savior see.
He's the long-expected prophet,
David's son, yet David's Lord.
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
He's the true and faithful Word.

Here we have a firm foundation;
Here the refuge of the lost;
Christ, the rock of our salvation,
His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.

LW 116:1, 4

When I Suffer Pains and Losses

When I suffer pains and losses,
Lord, be near, Let me hear
Comfort under crosses.
Point me, Father, to the heaven
Which Your Son For me won
When His life was given.

Under burdens of cross-bearing,
Though the weight May be great,
Yet I'm not despairing.
You designed the cross You gave me;
Thus You know All my woe
And how best to save me.

What at last does this world leave us
But a hand Full of sand
Or some loss to grieve us?
See what rich and noble graces
Our Lord shares With His heirs
In the heav'nly places.

Savior, Shepherd, my Defender,
I belong To the throng
Blood-bought for that splendor.
Having You, I want no other
Light of heav'n To be giv'n,
My dear God and Brother.

LW 423:1-2, 4-5

When in the Hour of Deepest Need

When in the hour of deepest need
We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought
No help or counsel yet have brought,

Our comfort then is this alone:
That we may meet before Your throne
And cry to You, O faithful God,
For rescue from our sorry lot.

For You have made a promise true
To pardon those who flee to You,
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Savior and our advocate.

And so we come, O God, today
And all our woes before You lay;
For sorely tried, cast down, we stand,
Perplexed by fears on ev'ry hand.

Oh, from our sins hide not Your face;
Absolve us through Your boundless grace!
Be with us in our anguish still!
Free us at last from ev'ry ill!

LW 428:1–5

Preparing for a Disaster

These resources are adapted from the Texas District Disaster Response Web site, Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas, and the American Red Cross.

Develop a Family Disaster Plan

Gather Information

Find out what types of disasters occur in your area. Disasters can be natural or man-made. Natural disasters include floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, extreme heat, wildfires, and thunderstorms/lightning. Man-made disasters include hazardous materials, railroad accidents, house and building fires, radiological accidents, nuclear power plant emergencies, and terrorism. Learn the warning systems and evacuation plans in your community. This information can be gathered from the National Weather Service, the Office of Emergency Management, and non-profit organizations like the American Red Cross and Salvation Army (see below for contact information).

Create a Plan with Your Family

Discuss the information you have gathered. Pick places to meet, including a place outside your home for an emergency such as a fire and a place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Pick an out-of-state friend as your family's check-in contact in case the family gets

separated. Discuss plans for your family in case you are ordered to evacuate the area. Write down your emergency contacts on the page provided below, and put it where everyone can see it.

Implement Your Plan

Post emergency telephone numbers by the phone. Install smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in your home if you don't already have them. Have your family learn basic safety measures such as first aid, CPR, how to turn off water, gas, and electricity coming into the house, and how to use a fire extinguisher. Teach your children how and when to call 911 or your local emergency services. Keep enough supplies in your home to survive at least three days. Assemble a disaster kit with items you may need if you have to evacuate (see below for disaster kit specifications).

Practice Your Plan

Ask questions to make sure family members remember meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills. Check smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year. Test and charge fire extinguishers according to manufacturer instructions. Replace stored water and food every six months.

A Family Disaster Kit

When a disaster strikes, there is often no time to collect the items you need to get by. A family disaster kit will help you to gather these items before a disaster strikes. Items you may need in your disaster kit will vary in different areas; however, you will want to include the following, which can be stored in a plastic tub:

- A three-day supply of precooked, nonperishable food
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- A manual can opener
- A change of clothing and footwear for each person
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first-aid kit including essential medications
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Roll of toilet paper and paper towels
- Copies of important papers
- Emergency tools
- A battery-powered radio with extra batteries
- A flashlight with extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys
- A credit card or cash
- Special items needed for infant, elderly, or disabled members of your family
- Sanitation supplies

Kids' Activity Survival Kit

These can all be stored in a backpack or duffel bag:

- A few favorite books
- Crayons, pencils or pens, and plenty of paper
- Scissors and glue
- Two favorite toys, such as a doll or action figure
- One or two board games
- A deck of cards
- A puzzle (one with lots of pieces is good—it takes a long time to do!)
- Small people figures and vehicles to play out what is happening during a disaster—such as ambulance, fire truck, helicopter, dump truck, police car, small boats
- Favorite stuffed animal or puppet
- Favorite blanket or pillow
- Pictures of the family and pet
- A “keep safe” box with a few treasures that make your child feel special

Evacuation Checklist

Should you and your family have to evacuate, the following checklist will help you through that process:

- Always follow instructions from emergency management officials.
- Collect survival kit, family members, and pets as quickly as possible.

- Each person should pack one bag with clothing, toiletries, personal items, and prescriptions (in original containers) for one week.
- Plan an evacuation route and destination.
- Notify your emergency contacts of your planned route and destination.
- Wear sturdy clothing and take additional clothing depending on weather and season.
- Secure your home: unplug appliances; close and lock doors and windows; board windows in preparation for a hurricane, if needed; engage alarm system.
- If freezing conditions are expected during your absence: turn off main water valve; drain faucets; turn off inside valves for external faucets and open outside faucets to drain.
- Leave early enough to minimize congestion or delay.
- Keep to main routes that are regularly traveled. Shortcuts and back roads may become dangerous, flooded, or blocked and are not as regularly patrolled if you experience mechanical difficulty or other emergency.
- Once you arrive at your destination, notify emergency contacts and points of contact there.
- Keep emergency contacts updated about your condition, location, and contact information.
- Maintain radio watch to determine when it is safe to return to your home.
- Upon return to your home, inspect external doors and windows to determine if security is intact. Call police if you see intentional damage or suspect intruders have entered your home.

Disaster Resources

211 is a phone number that connects people with important community services and volunteer opportunities. You can dial it just as you would 411 for information or 911 for an emergency. It provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for everyday needs and in times of crisis. 211 can offer access to the following types of services: Basic human-needs resources; physical and mental health resources; employment supports; support for older Americans and persons with disabilities; support for children, youth, and families; volunteer opportunities and donations.

A local Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregation can help to provide you with spiritual support during a time of crisis. The pastor can also help to connect you to local resources that may also be of service to you during difficult times. If you don't know who your local LCMS pastor is, or if you have evacuated to another city, you can log on to www.lcms.org and click on directories on the left side of the page. Or, you can call the main LCMS number at 1-888-843-5267 (1-888-The-LCMS) and ask for the number of the local LCMS congregation and pastor.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a national church body that can help direct you to the resources that you need in the aftermath of a disaster. The Web site and main phone number are listed above.

LCMS World Relief & Human Care is a branch within the LCMS that focuses on reaching out in mercy and compassion to those in need motivated by and in the clear name of Christ and His Gospel and according to the beautiful Lutheran confession of the faith. Within the Synod, this organization works closely with those who have been affected by disasters of any kind, providing a variety of resources to those in need. You can contact LCMS World Relief and Human Care through the Web site at *worldrelief.lcms.org* or by phone at 1-800-248-1930 x1380.

American Red Cross responds immediately to disasters, including house or apartment fires (the majority of disaster responses), hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hazardous materials spills, transportation accidents, explosions, and other natural and man-made disasters. Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition to these services, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is the assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster to enable them to resume their normal daily activities independently. The Red Cross also feeds emergency workers, handles inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, provides blood and blood products to disaster victims, and helps those affected by disaster to access other available resources. You can contact the Red Cross through the Web site at *www.redcross.org*, or by phoning the national headquarters: 202-303-4498.

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is a collaborative ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Following a major domestic disaster, LDR seeks to minister holistically to the unmet needs of those affected, regardless of faith or creed. Lutheran social ministry organizations serve as LDR affiliates providing spiritual and emotional care, hardship grants, long-term recovery, and volunteer coordination. The mission of LDR is to demonstrate Christ's compassion for people by promoting hope, healing, and wholeness for disaster survivors. You can contact LDR through their Web site at www.ldr.org; or by phoning 1-800-638-3522 x2748, or 773-380-2748.

Links to Other Disaster-Related Organizations

National Weather Service	www.nws.noaa.gov
Orphan Grain Train	www.ogt.org
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans	www.thrivent.com
Church World Service Emergency Response Program	www.churchworldservice.org
Lutheran Services in America	www.lutheranservices.org
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	www.nvoad.org
Camp Noah	www.campnoah.org
National Mental Health Association	www.nmha.org
Centers for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov
Weather Information	www.weather.gov www.weather.com
FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)	www.fema.gov
The Salvation Army	www.salvationarmy.org

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Emergency Phone List

Church phone _____

Pastor's phone _____

Police _____

Fire _____

Poison control _____

Doctor _____

Pharmacy _____

American Red Cross _____ 202-303-4498

Emergency contact 1 _____

Emergency contact 2 _____

Emergency contact 3 _____