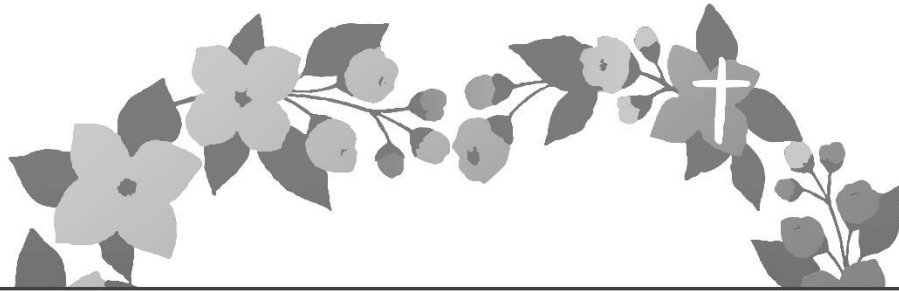
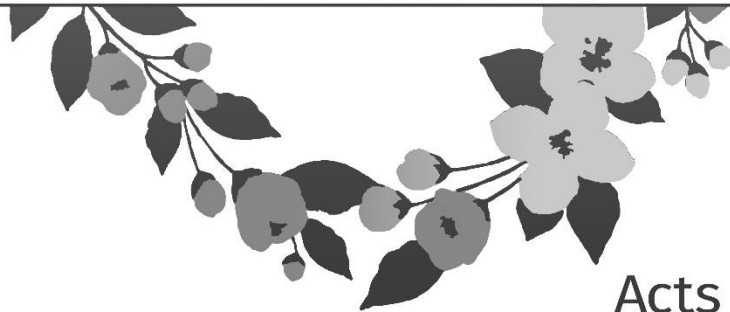


2021 LWML Prayer Service



He Prayed *with* Them



Acts 20:36b

He [Paul] knelt down and prayed with them all (Acts 20:36b).

The Rev. Robert L. Mundahl, Emeritus
LWML Pastoral Counselor 2015–2019

Introduction to the Prayer Service for 2021

We are encouraged in Scriptures to be people of prayer. *Rejoice always, **pray** [emphasis added] without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). This aspect of our lives marks us as children of the heavenly Father. He has promised to hear us and to answer our prayers by His wisdom for our physical and spiritual benefit.

Therefore, we pray: **Dear Father, being led by the power of the Holy Spirit, enable us to be bold in prayer. As the Apostle Paul prayed with them all, make our time with others an opportunity for prayer also. Through this Service, guided by Your Word, help us to expand our life of prayer to include those times when we pray with others. May every situation bring You glory, O Lord, as we pray of Your grace and peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

So, when was the last time you prayed with someone? Not **for** someone, but **with** someone? When my children were little, some of my most cherished memories are those times of praying with them. Two-year-olds can pray some wonderful prayers. Even with my grandchildren today I marvel at that time of prayer. How about your spouse? Do you pray with him or her? Table prayers are comfortable, but what about the ups and downs of married life? How about your best friend? Your neighbor? The waitress in the café? The stranger you just met? Do you regularly seek time to pray with them?

Our Service this year is intended to make that aspect of prayer a greater part of your life. We are good at praying **for** others. As with the Apostle Paul, I hope that we can become good at praying **with** others as well.

One example from many in my life

After the LWML Convention had ended in Mobile, Alabama, four of us headed to the downtown area for sightseeing and a local meal. As we stepped away from the curb to cross the street in front of our hotel, a younger man on a bicycle started shouting at me something like: "I saw you on TV. You are a very famous person, aren't you?" To which I answered, "No!" I suspected he was looking for a handout of some kind; if you are on television and famous, you must have money to spare. As he rode up to me in the middle of the street and my threesome reached the other side, I saw this as an opportunity to engage him in conversation and prayer. I learned he was unemployed and short on needed cash. He had a family and was looking for work. Could I help him today? At this point, I could have given him some money and just walked away, but we are people of prayer. I asked him if I could pray with him. His eyes got big and he said, "Yes!" I asked him his first name. Amazingly, it was the same as mine. And so we prayed together. We prayed for needed work, we prayed for family support, we prayed for God to be strong in his life, and for the love and grace of Jesus to be present always. When we had finished, I did share some of God's blessings to me with him. It was God's gift, not mine. No one bothered us through it all in the middle of the street, and we went on our separate ways. I trust God heard our prayer and blessed this man, even though I have never seen him again.

My desire is that we learn to pray **with** them all. — The Rev. Robert L. Mundahl



***He [Paul] knelt down
and prayed with them all
(Acts 20:36b).***

2021 LWML Prayer Service He Prayed *with* Them

Leader: We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN: "Today Your Mercy Calls Us" LSB 915/TLH 279/LW 347

Today Your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been,
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.

Today Your gate is open, And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome And pardon for their sin.
The past shall be forgotten, A present joy be giv'n,
A future grace be promised, A glorious crown in heav'n.

Today our Father calls us; His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather Around the heav'nly gates.
No question will be asked us How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered, It is our Father's home.

O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,
What should we do without You When heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer.



Leader: O Lord, open my lips,

All: and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Leader: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

All: make haste to help me, O Lord.

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

Leader: Blessed be God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: O come, let us worship Him.

Psalm 4:1–8

Leader: *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!*

All: O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

Leader: *But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.*

All: Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

Leader: *There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"*

All: You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

HYMN: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" LSB 770/TLH 457/LW 516

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness—Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arm, He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.



Isaiah 56:6–8

Reader 1: *“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—*

Reader 2: *These I will bring to my holy mountain, **and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples** [emphases added].” The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”*

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

1 Timothy 2:4

Leader: *God ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Discussion (optional)

How does this help us see others with whom we pray?

What should be included in our prayers about God and Jesus?

Prayer Activity

With someone near you, **offer a prayer out loud** for God’s help in keeping in the forefront of your **mind** those aspects of salvation that all need to hear from our lips.

Confession of Faith

All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and

sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Acts 20:17–38

Reader 3: *Now from Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in*

Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion (optional)

As Paul begins speaking to the pastors in Ephesus, he describes how he served the Lord.
What did he list?

To whom did Paul testify?

Paul's message:

Reader 4: *And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

Discussion (optional)

As Paul describes the end of his ministry, he shares with the pastors what will happen to him.
What does he list will happen?

Even with this in view, what will Paul continue to do?

Reader 5: *And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*

Discussion (optional)

The big reveal: *I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will _____.*

Reader 6: *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.*

Discussion (optional)

Paul also gives them a warning. Summarize:

Reader 7: *And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*"

Discussion (optional)

As Paul commended the pastors to God and to the Word, he showed them that, by working hard in this way, we must help the weak, for Jesus said: "It is more _____."

Reader 8: ***And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all*** [emphasis added]. *And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.*

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Discussion (optional)

This is the backdrop to Paul kneeling down and praying with them all. He did not say I will pray for you as I head to Jerusalem (although he probably did), but he immediately prayed with them.

Why much weeping?

Why the embracing?

Prayer often finds context in what is shared about life in general:
sickness, struggles, heartache, separation, concerns,
blessings, opportunities, good health, relief, connection

Prayer Activity

With someone near you, **offer a prayer out loud** for God's help in keeping your **ears** open to the struggles all people face and for the words needed to bring them hope and comfort.

HYMN: "Come, My Soul, with Every Care" LSB 779:1-2, 5-6/LW 433:1-2, 5-6

Come, my soul, with ev'ry care, Jesus loves to answer prayer;
He Himself has bid thee pray, Therefore will not turn away.

Thou art coming to a King, Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and pow'r are such None can ever ask too much.

While I am a pilgrim here, Let Thy love my spirit cheer;
As my guide, my guard, my friend, Lead me to my journey's end.

Show me what is mine to do; Ev'ry hour my strength renew.
Let me live a life of faith; Let me die Thy people's death.



John 15:12–17

Reader 9: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.*

Discussion (optional)

To love one another — how would you describe that as a Christian?

Prayer Activity

With someone near you, **offer a prayer out loud** for God's help in keeping before your **eyes** those who need our love in Christ spoken from our lips.

Reader 10: *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

Reader 11: *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another."*

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Discussion (optional)

For what have we been chosen by God to do?

Wrapped in the connection to pray, Jesus said: ***“so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you [emphasis added]”*** (John 14:13). This is a confidence booster.

Prayer Activity

With someone near you, **offer a prayer out loud** for God’s help in keeping before **us** a life wrapped in Jesus’ love as He bears fruit through us to all in need.

Begin to practice praying out loud with your parents or your spouse or your children or your grandchildren. Be bold to practice even with your friends. Be confident even with the stranger.

1. Ask for permission — invite them to pray with you.
2. Personalize — seek their first name.
3. Learn about them. What is going on in their life.
4. Do pray with them by including what you have learned.
5. Share the wonders of Jesus who loved even them.
6. Close in Jesus’ name.

Think of this like witnessing through prayer: **Making Jesus known!**

HYMN: ***“Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying”*** LSB 826/TLH 496/LW 318

Hark, the voice of Jesus crying, “Who will go and work today?
Fields are white and harvest waiting—Who will bear the sheaves away?”
Loud and long the Master calleth; Rich reward He offers thee.
Who will answer gladly saying, “Here am I, send me, send me?”

If you cannot speak like angels, If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus, You can say He died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked With the Judgment’s dread alarms,
You can lead the little children To the Savior’s waiting arms.

If you cannot be a watchman, Standing high on Zion’s wall,
Pointing out the path to heaven, Off’ring life and peace to all,
With your prayers and with your bounties You can do what God commands;
You can be like faithful Aaron, Holding up the prophet’s hands.

Let none hear you idly saying, “There is nothing I can do,”
While the multitudes are dying And the Master calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly, Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth, “Here am I, send me, send me!”



The Lord's Prayer

All: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.

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

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

All: Amen.

HYMN: "Rise, Shine, You People" LSB 825

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered
Our human story; God in Him is centered.
He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded, With grace unbounded.

See how He sends the pow'rs of evil reeling;
He brings us freedom, light and life and healing.
All men and women, who by guilt are driven, Now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate, your banners high unfurling,
Your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.
To all the world go out and tell the story Of Jesus' glory.

Tell how the Father sent His Son to save us,
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.
Tell how the Spirit calls from ev'ry nation His new creation.





***He [Paul] knelt down and
prayed with them all (Acts 20:36b).***

This Prayer Service is designed to be used by LWML groups and copyright is secured through the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. All rights reserved. For use outside of LWML events, unless specifically noted, the hymns printed in this publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the LWML and from the other copyright holders. Bible verses are taken from the ESV translation unless otherwise noted.

2021 LWML Prayer Service written by The Rev. Robert Mundahl, Faribault, Minnesota,
LWML Pastoral Counselor 2015–2019
Published by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2021
lwml.org

