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Personal and Family Devotions

October 1 to December 31, 2025

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Devotions for October

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Devotions for November

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Devotions for December

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Meet the Authors

Deaconess Amanda Nicks (née Korthase) was born and reared in Michigan. For many years, she worked for a publisher. She has always had a heart to serve the church; this led her to attend seminary in Fort Wayne and become a deaconess. Her first call was to a church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She left this call to get married and move to Arkansas to begin life with her husband, Bobby. Amanda loves to read, craft, and complete jigsaw puzzles.

Rev. Dr. Wilfred Karsten was blessed to serve two congregations as pastor for forty years: first at Zion Lutheran Church in Accident, Maryland, and then at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois. He and his wife, Lynette, an organist, live in a hilltop home in rural Iowa, where they view marvelous sunrises and sunsets and thank God for the blessings of each day. They have two daughters, two sons-in-law, two granddaughters on earth, and two grandchildren with the Lord.

Rev. Dr. Scott Seidler has been senior pastor at Shepherd of the Desert in Scottsdale, Arizona, for six years. He loves family time, teaching, hiking, and golf. **Rev. John Karolus** has served at Shepherd since 2021 and enjoys life with his wife, Caeli. They enjoy witnessing God's incredible work in the lives of students and families each day. **Tracy Grindle** has been secretary at Shepherd for twenty-five years. She has a spectacular family and talks incessantly about her sweet little grandsons.

ORDER OF FAMILY WORSHIP

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

All: Amen.

Leader (*With all repeating each phrase*): Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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 will be forever. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

THE MEDITATION

THE PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER: 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: 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.

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.

—Adapted from Luther's Small Catechism

See prayer section for daily prayers, as well as prayers for church festivals and other special occasions (marked by † in the devotions).

Mealtime Prayers

Asking a Blessing

The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, make the sign of the holy cross, fold their hands, and say:

The eyes of all look to You, [O LORD,] and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15–16)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts, which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Returning Thanks

Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently make the sign of the holy cross and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love endures forever. [He] gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the LORD delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. (Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9–11)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

—Adapted from Luther's Small Catechism

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1



Read Luke 12:22–34 ♦ Psalm 130

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. *Luke 12:22*

Do Not Be Anxious

What do we gain by spending our time feeling anxious? Anxiety can quickly take over our life and direct our thoughts and actions. As we read here in Luke 12, Jesus is telling His disciples not to worry about shallow things, such as what to eat or wear. He points them to the ravens. The birds don't worry. They don't have storehouses. God provides for them according to His plan for them, and in that same manner, He provides for us. Therefore we pray that He gives "us this day our daily bread."

It is easy to prioritize our physical needs above everything else. Of course, it's important to be clothed and fed, but material things should not dominate our thoughts. We are to place our trust in God to provide what we truly need—which is a Savior from sin who fully provides for us in heaven. We praise and thank Him for all He has blessed us with, according to His will for us. Then we are able to use these blessings to bless our neighbors. As sinners, we fail at this often. But thanks be to God that He sent His only Son to pay for our sins. We listen to Jesus' words and trust in His promises. He provides all that we need to complete the work He has set before us to do.

*Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for providing for all our needs.
We often worry about many things in life; please give us
peace and comfort knowing we are Yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2



Read Matthew 7:1–12 ♦ Psalm 2:1–8

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! *Matthew 7:11*

The Father Gives Good Gifts

There are many times when I have received wonderful gifts from my parents. They have never given me anything harmful or dangerous. We may get caught up thinking about the good gifts we receive. While acknowledging good gifts, in itself, is not bad, we often forget how God the Father gives good gifts. We don't always get what we want when we ask, but God knows our heart and hears our prayers in Jesus' name. And He always provides what we need.

At the beginning of every Divine Service, we confess our sins and receive absolution. That is, we ask God to forgive us of these sins, and then we hear how He has forgiven us through the pastor. God sent His only Son to pay the price we owe for every sin. We do not deserve to receive such a wonderful gift. But God loves us beyond what we can understand.

We have experienced the ways our heavenly Father has used our earthly parents to bless us. Let us reflect on and thank God for the good gifts He has given us through our family and our pastor.

Heavenly Father, You know what we need more than we understand. Thank You for giving us good gifts every day, but especially we thank You for giving us Your Son to die on the cross to pay for our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3



Read Deuteronomy 4:15–31 ♦ Psalm 119:9–16

Beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female. *Deuteronomy 4:16*

Beware of False Idols

We can be distracted by all the false idols around us. We easily fall prey to them. Many times we don't realize that we create false idols by putting other things first in our lives, above God. Take an inventory of things that hinder your time of devotion. What takes you away from reading your Bible or spending time in prayer? It could be hitting the snooze button on Sunday morning and sleeping beyond the start of church.

The First Commandment is specific about this very thing: "You shall have no other gods." Martin Luther explains what this means in his Small Catechism: "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Putting God first, spending time in His Word, and letting the Commandments be a curb, guide, and mirror in our lives allows us to see these false idols for what they are.

We need not think that we do this alone. We have help in removing false idols from our lives. Fully human, Jesus was tempted just as we are tempted, and He understands what we face every day. Yet He fully obeyed His Father's commands. He did this for us because we cannot. He is our true God and is with us always.

Dear God, thank You for providing us with a way to overcome false idols in our lives. Guide us today and always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4



Read Matthew 8:1–17 ♦ Psalm 80

This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:
“He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.” *Matthew 8:17*

The Healing Works of Jesus

Some days it seems like illness and disease are everywhere. As hard as we try, we cannot avoid them. Dealing with illness can be overwhelming, daunting, and disheartening. We would love to take away all the pain and suffering we see around us.

As we read this passage about Jesus healing those who are ill, we begin to be filled with hope. Jesus heals a paralyzed servant. With just a touch, He heals Peter’s mother-in-law. We pray that those around us who are sick will be made well. Today, we see healings happen, but we also see loved ones die from sickness and disease. We know that on the Last Day all will be healed and all suffering will end. We cling to this in times of trouble. We bring these encouraging words to those around us who are suffering and facing illness.

Jesus conquered sickness and death on the cross. Even though we die, we will not stay dead: “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 6:5).

*Heavenly Father, Your will is good and perfect.
Help us to find comfort in this. We look forward
to the Last Day, when all will be made well.
In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5



Read Mark 4:35–41 ♦ Psalm 86:1–10

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

Jesus Calms the Storm

I have never been caught on the sea during a big storm like the one the disciples and Jesus experienced in this biblical account. But I grew up in Michigan, which is surrounded by the Great Lakes. I have seen rough waters, and I wouldn't want to be caught in them. A storm can quickly capsize a ship and take the lives of all on board.

In our reading today, the disciples were scared they were going to die. If any of us had been in their position, we would probably have felt the same way. We have our moments of being worried for our own safety. Unlike the disciples and us, Jesus does not worry. He was asleep during the storm until His disciples woke Him. This account shows us Jesus' authority over all things. With just His voice, God the Son calmed the wind and brought peace to the sea.

Jesus gave the disciples what they asked of Him. And He hears us when we come to Him with our prayers. He continues to love and care for us even when we doubt or are scared. His authority never changes. We can take great comfort in knowing that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, loves and cares for us, protects and forgives us today and always.

*Dear Father, thank You for sending Your Son to care for
Your people and bring us peace in times of trouble.
In His name we pray. Amen.*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6



Read Matthew 9:1–17 ♦ Psalm 97

But when He heard it, He said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” *Matthew 9:12*

A Sinner's Need for a Savior

In this passage from Matthew, the Pharisees are not impressed by the company Jesus is keeping: tax collectors and sinners. Why was Jesus spending time with sinners and not the righteous?

Just as Jesus says, those who are sick need the physician; those who are well do not. We are sin-sick and in need of the Great Physician. We need the Savior. Sin will infect us until we die or until Christ returns. We give thanks that we have a merciful God with a perfect plan to restore us.

At the beginning of every Divine Service, we reflect on and confess our sins. We receive the medicine of absolution from the pastor, who stands in the stead of Christ. We receive Christ's forgiveness, which He paid for with His death on the cross. Our sins are forgiven! The Great Physician has made us well. Thanks be to God!

At our resurrection, Christ Jesus will heal us completely. Made sinless by His righteousness, we will be restored to our Creator in heaven, and there we will spend eternity with Jesus. What a wonderful day that will be!

Dear Father in heaven, we are thankful You provided the Great Physician, Jesus, who on the cross paid for the cure for our sins that we might be well. In His name we pray. Amen.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7



Read Matthew 9:32–38 ♦ Psalm 121

Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful,
but the laborers are few.” *Matthew 9:37*

Needed: Laborers

The verses leading up to Matthew 9:37 reveal many healings that Jesus performed. We are reminded that all of us are affected by the terminal illness that is sin. Jesus paid the price for this sin with His life. It is to our benefit to hear again and again that we need to confess our sins and that Jesus completed the work of restoring us to God. We need laborers, pastors, to remind us of this task.

Prayer is needed for these laborers, as it says in verse 38: “Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” All of us are called to witness Christ crucified. We can share God’s Word with those around us. We reflect Christ’s light by how we act and how we treat others. We can invite people to church. Praying for others is always a good thing.

The harvest is plentiful, and not everyone is called to be a pastor or church worker. But we are all called to share Christ with others. We need pastors in our churches to continue to share the Word and Sacraments with God’s people, so we continue to prepare laborers for the ever-growing harvest. May God guide and direct all those who feel drawn to the ministry field.

*Dear God, You are the one who waters the seeds that grow
into faithful members of Your kingdom; please be with us as
we share the Good News with those who have not yet heard.
In Jesus’ precious name. Amen.*