

Prayers

August 13, 2006 - 10th Sunday after Pentecost

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St. John's Lutheran Church

These prayers were offered during the prayers on the Sunday following Bishop Warren's decision.

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Bring Your peace and love to those who are driven by hate, and to those who are killed and injured by that hate. Grant Your wisdom to the leaders of Hizbollah, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran that they may see that seeking to destroy a nation and its people is not a means to peace. Bring Your wisdom to those in Israel who view tanks, war planes, troops, and the subjugation of a people as the means to their ultimate security and peace. Lord in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We give You thanks for Your consecration of the loving, committed, exclusive, lifelong relationship that was celebrated in our sanctuary yesterday. Be with Sophie Wackenhut and Evan Szymanski as they begin their relationship together as true partners in Your eyes. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Give peace and strength to Pastor Brad, Heavenly Father. Help us to be mindful that Pastor Brad is now

- * preparing to defend why he should be allowed to do what he is called to do,
- * keeping his relationship with Darin strong in these stressful times and in light of Darin — an ordained minister — also having been injured by the Lutheran church,
- * addressing his family's love for him and understandable anger against those who are hurting him,
- * responding to newspaper and television reporters,
- * having articles published and news clips broadcast about him — when what is said does not always truly reflect Pastor Brad's feelings and intentions,
- * and being strong for all of us — all while holding down the full-time job of being our pastor.

Hold him in the palm of Your hand, Lord. Every time he takes a deep breath, help Pastor Brad feel Your loving, caring and strengthening presence. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Bless the Bishop of our Synod, Ron Warren, and members of his staff. We seek Your wisdom, Lord, to understand a world where a holy, spiritual leader of our Synod, after much prayer and discernment, can come conclusions about Your will that are polar opposites from the conclusions of those in our church. Help us to always treat Bishop

Warren and members of his staff as brothers and sisters in Christ, whom You also love as Your children. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray especially for Jeannette Burgess, who in addition to being our music director, also works in the Synod office. We know that Jeannette loves both Pastor Brad and Bishop Warren, and that the current situation has created substantial tension in her life. Both the synod and our congregation have been blessed by her unique gifts. Bring her Your gift of peace. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Be with those members of our congregation who have been asked or forced to leave other congregations, prevented from the ministry, or otherwise been scarred by church institutions. The allegations against Pastor Brad cause them to re-live that intense, personal pain over again. Help us to empathize with their anger and pain. Let us all love them and let them know that, in this community, they are welcome as full participants and travelers in our journey of faith together. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Many of us are anxious and angry about formal charges being brought against our Pastor. We have lost the hope that charges would not be brought. We are offended that the charges attempt to take a lifelong, emotional, loving, commitment to share one's life with another and reduce it to illicit sexual acts. We do not know how the results of what have been set in motion this week will end for Pastor Brad and for our congregations. Let us take Jesus' command to "be not afraid" to heart. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord, be with those of us, and our family and friends, who suffer physical or emotional pain or illness. Bring Your healing power to those in ill health. Help us to cope with depression, substance abuse, and other emotional and physical illnesses. We especially pray for those who are listed in our prayer list, as well those we now name aloud or in our hearts. [pause for names]

Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

And now let us offer our prayers and petitions to You, either silently or aloud. [pause]
Lord, in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Help us on this day to commit ourselves to the words of Saint Peter, given to us this day in our second lesson.

Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of those who came before us who set an example for us by loving You and loving their neighbors, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Into Your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen