

Prayer for Recruitment Sunday or Good Shepherd Sunday

The following General Prayer may be used for Recruitment Sunday. It is also appropriate for the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday). It may be read antiphonally or the pastor may offer the entire prayer.

Lord Jesus, you are the good Shepherd. With a shepherd's heart, you yearn for lost lambs. You sought us out when we went astray. You willingly gave your life for your flock that we might be yours forever. Your voice first called out to us in the gospel to trust in you for eternal life. In you we will never perish.

Lord, accept the praise and adoration we bring you this day.

Lord, deliver your church from the threats and opposition of those who desire its destruction. Protect us from those who do not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but who by force, deception, and false doctrine seek to harm your sheep. Shield your flock also from false teachers and those who divide the flock.

Grant us unity that there may be one flock and one Shepherd.

Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, send forth faithful workers to watch over your flock. Bless and prosper our church's schools for the training of future pastors and teachers. Give us dedicated, godly instructors to prepare and inspire young men and women to feed your sheep and lambs. Fill parents with a love for your Kingdom's work and raise up from their homes youths who long to serve in your church's public ministry.

Bless all who serve as pastors and teachers with the fullness of your Holy Spirit's gifts. Protect them and their families and guide and strengthen them with your inspired Word.

Tender Shepherd, we commend into your hands the homeless, the despairing, the sick and the dying. Lead them to springs of living water and wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Special intercessions and supplications.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Lord, you died and rose that we might have life to the fullest. For all that you have given us, we praise you.

Alleluia! Thanks be to God. Amen

Prayer for Recruitment Sunday or after Pentecost

The following General Prayer may be used for Recruitment Sunday. It is also appropriate for the Sundays after Pentecost or on occasions when a more general prayer is desired. It may be read antiphonally or the pastor may offer the entire prayer.

O almighty and eternal God, you sent your Son according to your will, to rescue us from this present evil age. In every age you send out messengers of this gospel that people everywhere might trust in Christ and receive eternal life.

We praise you for delivering us from sin and death and creating us anew for your service.

We thank you that in your grace you have poured out such rich blessings upon your Church. In the preaching of Law and Gospel, in the administration of the Sacraments, and in the absolution of sins you give your people peace and joy. Create in your Church everywhere and appreciation for the Means of Grace and a hunger for spiritual food. Bless those who labor in your mission fields, that they may bring the good news of salvation to those who live in places where we cannot go. Give them joy in their work and an undivided loyalty to you and your Word. Bless their families and keep them spiritually strong and physically safe.

Bless our congregation and fill our members with such love for you and your house, that we glorify you in all our worship and our daily living.

O Lord, we pray for the Christian home. Grant that it may be a secure nurturing place for your little lambs. Move mothers and fathers to pray and sacrifice for the welfare of their children. Give them enough of hardship to build their reliance on you. We especially implore you, Lord, to raise up from our homes the next generation of leaders of the church. Create in youthful hearts the desire to be a faithful pastor or diligent Christian teacher. Curb materialism, that our youth may not contemplate earthly occupations solely on the basis of earthly rewards, but may look to what serves you and your kingdom.

Prosper every effort to train pastors and teachers. Move us by your love to pray for and support our ministerial training schools. Strengthen the weak students, encourage those who are tempted to give up. Lift their eyes and ours to the fields that are ripe for harvest.

Lord, we pray also for all who suffer for the sake of your name. Give them courage and patience in suffering. Be their protection and defense. Heavenly Father, into your hands we commit all who are sick or in pain this day. We pause to pray for a friend, family member, or neighbor who needs your help.

Silent prayer.

Father, hear our prayers for the sake of Jesus, our Savior, in whose name we also pray:
(*The Lord's Prayer*)

Prayer for Recruitment Sunday or Advent

The following General Prayer may be used for Recruitment Sunday. It is also appropriate for Advent. It is adapted from the Prayer for St. John the Baptist's Day in *The Lutheran Liturgy*, page 377.

O almighty and eternal God, you gave your one and only Son to be the Light of the world and the atoning sacrifice for our sins. You sent John the Baptist as a preacher of repentance and a herald of Christ's kingdom. We praise you for our deliverance from sin and death, which you secured by the acceptable sacrifice of the Lamb who was slain. We thank you for revealing your tender mercies in Holy Scripture for our comfort and to build up your holy Christian Church on earth.

Grant that we may daily experience your goodness through the comfort of your Word. Let us by faith obtain the forgiveness of our sins. Fill our hearts with praise and our lips with rejoicing, and guide our feet in the way of peace.

In your grace grant to your Church pastors and teachers who faithfully bear witness to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, that all who believe in Him may not perish but have eternal life. Preserve among us and establish everywhere the ministry of the Word to instruct the young in sound doctrine, to convert sinners, to comfort the distressed, and guide the faithful.

Lead many devout parents to raise their sons to become prophets of the Highest, to go before the Lord to prepare His way, to give knowledge of salvation to His people. Raise up an army of young people who will grow strong in the Spirit. Send them forth as humble but unwavering witnesses of the Light. Let them gladly forego expensive clothing, worldly pleasures, and material goods. Fill them with humility so that by their ministry Christ may increase. Give your church benevolent Christians and people who with prudent counsel and generous gifts will establish institutions and agencies to make your salvation known to all nations.

Special intercessions and supplications.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Lord, sanctify us through your truth and grant us your peace, that we may praise and glorify you now and eternally, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we also pray,

(The Lord's Prayer)

Prayer for Those Serving in Gospel Ministry

Heavenly Father, you have called your ministers to be deacons. Give them a willing spirit to sustain them in service to you and to the souls entrusted to their care.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have called your ministers to be elders. Move the hearts of your people to show them the respect due to those who labor in the world.

Holy Comforter, you have called your ministers to be overseers. Enlarge your fold by adding new sheep to their flocks.

God of all the universe, we marvel that you have called pastors and teachers to be stewards of the mysteries of your grace. Give them the hearts of ambassadors of peace, the eyes of holy watchmen, and the strength of builders upon your firm foundation. Open our ears to their words, that we may remain royal priests who proclaim your praise. Amen.

Prayer for Christ's Presence with Those Serving in Public Ministry

Lord Jesus, you took our sin and gave us your righteousness. You took our death and gave us eternal life. You took our hell and have us your heaven. You did this, not because we are so deserving, but because *you* are so kind and loving.

Today we praise you for putting the frightening message of your law and the comforting message of your *gospel* into the hearts and on the lips of your chosen servants who occupy Christian classrooms and Christian pulpits. Lord Jesus, you came not to *be served*, but *to serve*, and to give your life as a ransom for many. Because you love us, you instituted the public ministry. Guide the thinking of those whom you have called into this ministry, so that they will view their ministry as you viewed yours – as an opportunity to *serve* your people.

Once long ago when you were with your loved ones on the slope of a hill in Galilee you promised: “I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.” Help those who today labor for you in your church to claim that promise, even though they can no longer see your footprints in their dust, or feel the touch of your hand, or hear the sound of your voice. As they do their important work in pulpits and classrooms and sickrooms, make them constantly aware of your presence. Guide their ministry, so that those whom they serve not only see the light in them, but also *feel the warmth* of that light. Encourage them, especially when Satan seems to be winning his little triumphs, to believe that you are with them always, that through them you are working out your good and holy will. When they are tempted to feel alone in a world that seems cold and impersonal, remind them of what you told them at their baptism – that nothing and nobody can separate them from your love.

Impress upon us all a deep sense of our responsibility, that we may support the work of Christian ministry while it is day. Have mercy upon us, Lord Jesus, and with your grace fulfill what we are unable to do. Hear us for your sake. Amen.

Prayer for God's Preservation of the Public Ministry

Father almighty and all-merciful, we offer you our praise and thanksgiving for the coming of another day, for this gathering of your people, and above all for the assurance that you are present among us with all your grace and your favor. We thank you, Father, for each one of the thousands of your unnamed and unknown children who down through the centuries labored and even died to keep your name alive, and who helped to pass on the Scriptures to us.

Father, we thank you also that in our generation you have raised up hundreds and hundreds of men and women who stand in the classrooms and pulpits of our church and explain your loving plans to us and our children. Blessed Spirit of God, because you have raised up chosen witnesses to teach us, we know that since Jesus Christ lived a perfect life in our place, and died an innocent death in our place there is no question about our eligibility for your forgiveness.

It was your idea, Father, to place the double message of your holy law and of your magnificent love into the hearts and on the lips of sinful human beings in the teaching and preaching ministry. We beg of you, Father, to preserve this ministry. Moses and Isaiah and St. Paul knew from experience that serving as your messenger is never easy; Satan will make sure of that. Those who speak for you today know that, too. They know what it's like to feel discouraged and lonely; they experience moments when you seem so far away. When such difficult moments come, surround them with your love. Reassure them that you are concerned about them, that you care for them deeply. Although you give them tasks that are beyond their human ability, remind them that you have promised to strengthen them to carry out those tasks. Let them find joy in serving you.

Help them to love those whom they serve. And then, in turn, help the members of our congregations to recognize and appreciate that love, and to respect them for bringing us and our children your word. We ask all this for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church and the Savior of our souls. Amen.

Prayer for Young People Contemplating Preparation for Gospel Ministry

Father, again this morning we have been confronted with the staggering thought that you, the Lord of heaven and earth, want friendship and fellowship with us. And still more, your Son himself has assured us that through his perfect *life* for us and his innocent death for us there is no impediment, no barrier to that fellowship.

Father, we thank you that in the Christian church you have raised up men and women who are dedicating their life and their abilities to spreading this precious truth which you permitted us to hear. This morning we ask you to raise up many of your sons and daughters in the upcoming generation to follow the same blessed path. Speak strongly and surely to the young Christians of our church as they contemplate the many career choices that confront them. Help them to see the immense dignity of investing one's life in the only work that's going to make any difference on Judgment Day. Open their eyes as they look at *your world*, so that they will be able to see it as a world in need of what you have taught them and of what they have to offer. And as they look at *themselves*, don't let them ever forget that it is only because of your grace that they are what they are.

Remind them not only *who* they are, but – more important – *whose* they are. Remind them that you have chosen them not only for a life as your *child* in *another* world, but you have equipped them for a special role as your *partner* in *this* world. Give them the willingness and the courage to demonstrate your love to people in a world that's trying so hard to ignore you. And, Lord, if you have your eye on one of our children or grandchildren to speak for you in a Christian classroom or pulpit, then help us not to do or say anything to discourage that loved one from following your call.

Strengthen our church as it seeks to convince people that Jesus Christ is the only way anybody is ever going to find his way back to God. Help each of us to be a transforming force, a light to the world, and a salt in the earth.

These are our prayers, Lord. And now we join in your prayer,
(*The Lord's Prayer*)

Prayer for the Recruitment of Candidates for the Ministry

Our God and our Father, we marvel at how you have shared your love and your truth with us. You give us words that express depths of your thought and love which stagger our imagination. With the message of your judgment on sin you strip us naked before your holiness, and drive us to our knees. Then you lift us up and clothe us and feed us with the wondrously good news of your forgiving love in Jesus Christ. You provide answers to the biggest questions anyone can ask in life – like “Where did I come from?” and “Why am I here?” and “Where am I going?”

Father, we live in an age when many are blind to the one great fact in the universe: that in the person of Jesus Christ you invaded life on our planet, in order to lead sinners back into your family. And just because people ignore this one great fact, they're groping in the dark, looking for answers to questions which cannot be answered without faith in you.

Father, this morning we ask you, in particular, to open the eyes of the younger members of your family to see the truth about this universe. Help them to discover you, to learn to respect your fierce hatred of sin, and to treasure your marvelous mercy towards sinners.

As they contemplate their future life's world, convince them that there is a higher and better way of choosing their career than merely on the basis of their likes or dislikes. Help them to think of their future job and career not in terms of things that can be accumulated, but in terms of people who can be helped. Give them your mind and your heart, and plant in them the readiness and the desire to prepare to take their place in the long line of men and women who have served as your witnesses.

Dear Savior, so often we like to think that our life belongs to us. We imagine that our bodies are ours to do with as we please, that our minds are a field where we can grow what we want, and that our future is ours to shape. Forgive us all, Father, for our tendency to accept your gifts of intelligence and personality so matter-of-factly. Remind us that you have designed us and purchased us and equipped us to live as people who belong to you completely.

We ask all this not because we deserve to ask it, but because you have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Amen.

Prayer for Our Synod's Work and for the Young People Who May Lead It.

Lord God, merciful Savior, in your grace you have given us the privilege and responsibility to carry your word to the world. We pray that you would give to each of us the zeal to perform that task eagerly and joyfully. Help us to respond to your mercy and grace with the desire to share that message with others.

We also pray that you will move the young people in our church to consider prayerfully whether they might serve you full time in this work as pastors or teachers. Let them see the great opportunities before us to win souls and to nourish believers with the Word. Lead them to trust that you will give them the skill, the ability, and the desire to preach and teach your Word, and assure them that you will bless whatever they do in your name.

And, Lord, we pray that you would bless the work that we all do together as a synod. We recognize that you have united us as your children. In that unity of faith, lead us to want to bring others into your family through the Gospel. Move us to work tirelessly, to pray constantly, to speak boldly, and to trust confidently in your promises, so that your kingdom may grow and your will be done.

All of this we ask in your name, O Lord Jesus. Amen.

Prayer that the Work of the Gospel Ministry be Valued and Considered by the Young

Lord of the Harvest, in love you sent your Son to die not only for us but for the sins of the whole world. Although your Holy Spirit has led us to know and believe those promises, we recognize that many still do not know you and what you have done for them.

Help us, Lord, as people who have been blessed with the light of your grace, to share that light with others. And to lead us in that joyful task of sharing the gospel, we ask that you would bless our church with servants of your Word who can guide us and direct us in that task. While many young people today are looking for wealth and worldly success, lead the young people in our church to recognize that there is no greater wealth and success than to serve you as a full time worker in your church. Let them hear your voice calling them to serve. And when you call, let them answer as Isaiah did, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

Lord, we know that the time for your grace in this world is limited. The signs of the end times are all around us, reminding us that you could return at any time. Give us a sense of urgency as we work to share your Word with the world. Give us a sense of commitment, as we hear and study your Word to grow stronger in our faith. And give us a sense of heartfelt joy, since we know that you have made us your own, given us a mission, and have promised to bless us in the work of sharing your Son with those around us and with the world.

We pray this in the name of your Son, our Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Future Workers and Their Mission

Heavenly Father it is your will that everyone hear the gospel, believe it, and be saved. We pray, send us out as laborers into your harvest to proclaim our Savior to others. And as you open our mouths to witness for Christ, also open hearts to welcome him by faith.

Dearest Jesus, you have commissioned us to preach the gospel to all creation. Give us boldness to be witnesses of your name and salvation in the course of our daily lives. Inspire our love for lost souls with the love you have for us, which compelled you to die for our sins.

Holy Spirit, make us aware of opportunities to witness for our Savior. Give us a sense of urgency to work in the Father's harvest while it is yet the day of salvation, before the night of judgement comes. Move us to give abundantly of our possessions so that, as partners with other Christians, we will be able to send forth missionaries into the farthest regions of the earth.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless the faculty, staff, and students of each of our synod's schools of ministerial education. Use the facilities and the people at each campus to train future pastors, teachers, and leaders for your church. Move more parents to encourage their children to consider training to be full-time servants of the Gospel. Guide the youth of this congregation to see the joys and privileges of serving in the public ministry. Above all, bless the efforts of those who currently serve in your harvest-field. Keep them faithful to your Word of truth and confident in the knowledge that their labors in your name are never in vain. Hear those and all our prayers for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Prayer for the Synod's Efforts to Train Ministers of the Gospel

Lord of heaven and earth, you are the fountain of all wisdom. We praise you for sharing your wisdom with us earthly creatures, wisdom which we couldn't have gotten anywhere else. You acted in history to exchange your Son's holiness for our unholiness. You asked your Son to accept as his own our ungodly status. Best of all, you have declared every person who ever lived to be perfectly covered with Jesus' perfection.

But, Father, you've given us this information not only *for ourselves*. You have given us the responsibility of sharing this information *with the next generation*. And so we ask you to look with favor on the efforts which the 1200 congregations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod are making, in order to train the next generation of men and women who will step into the classrooms and pulpits of our church. Bless the young people now enrolled in these training schools. Open up your word to them. Teach them especially to respect your fierce hatred of sin and to treasure your marvelous mercy towards sinners.

We thank you for these young minds, which are open to the teaching of your word. We thank you for young hearts which have found their forgiveness in you and their supreme joy in advancing your holy cause. As these young brothers and sisters pursue their high calling, give them patience and diligence, and guard them against becoming discouraged when the road seems long and their studies are difficult. Take them up into your kind, almighty hands. Bless them, and keep them. Give those who have been called to teach in these training schools calm judgment, love for their students, and above all, intense devotion to Jesus Christ – all of which are so necessary if they are to help their students grow to emotional and spiritual maturity.

We ask this in the name of him who lived a perfect life for us, who died an innocent death for us, who rose victoriously for us, who is ruling the world for us, and who is coming again to claim us as his own. Amen.

Prayer for Those Being Trained in the Synod's Ministerial Education System

Lord of the church, we thank you for establishing the holy Christian Church, and for maintaining this fellowship of believers down to the present. Over many centuries you have in each generation raised up faithful sons and daughters of yours who not only treasured your truth, but faithfully passed it on to the next generation. And now you are calling *us* to do the same in *our* generation.

Jesus, our only Savior and Friend, once long ago on the shore of the Sea of Galilee you reinstated Simon Peter as your apostle. At that time you told him: "Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep." Through your apostle Paul you instructed your church: "The things you have heard me say, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." In obedience to these clear commands, we have established ministerial training schools, to provide a steady supply of Christian teachers and pastors. Lord, we can build campuses; we can call faculty members to teach. But only *you* can touch the *mind* and warm the *heart* and move the *will* of a young man or woman to prepare to step in front of a Christian congregation or a Christian classroom and speak for you.

We beg of you, show your mercy to the young people presently enrolled at our synod's four ministerial training schools. Help them to grow as Christians. Growing up, as they must, in a world that is cold and unstable and confusing and misleading, help them to find secure footing on the slippery paths they must walk. Let them so profit from the instruction they receive that they will grow in favor with God and man. Give them the teachers at these training schools a heart for those whom they teach. Fill them with a love which mirrors the love that led you to *live* a perfect *life* and to *die* an innocent *death*, so that teachers and students can live close to you now and in your presence forever.

Precious Savior, we dare to ask all this not because we deserve the privilege, but only because you have made us God's children and earned for us the right to approach your Father with our prayers. In your precious name we offer them. Amen.

Prayer for the Schools in the WELS Ministerial Education System

Prayer for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Merciful Lord Jesus, by your Word you have taught us that those who serve as your under-shepherds and pastor your people are your personal gifts to your church. We give you thanks for the faithful servants you continue to supply. Guide and bless their labors, we pray, that they may love your people, but even more that they may lead your people by the bold and true preaching of your Word.

We also ask a special measure of your blessing today upon Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, that school which trains young men to follow your call into the pastoral ministry. Give skill and discernment to the faculty, that they may impart their lessons clearly and without error. Give zeal and dedication to the students, that they may absorb the learning that will best fit them to serve you in their future work. Attend teachers and students alike with your grace, that their efforts may prepare a new generation of pastors for your church whose faith and ministry will be founded firmly upon those truths engraved upon the Seminary's cornerstone, of salvation that you give to sinners by grace alone, by faith alone, by Scripture alone.

Likewise, set our hearts upon those truths, and then open our hearts and those of our fellow believers to support the work of all our synod's schools of ministerial education in abundant measure with our prayers, our offerings, and our appreciation of the blessings you give through them to us all. In your own precious name we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Lord and Savior, we bring before you the needs of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. We pray that this preparatory school of our synod may continue to experience your help and comfort, protection from all dangers, and deliverance from the devil. Lead its faculty to give you joyful thanks and praise and continue to bless their work of preparing young people for service to you in the full-time ministry of the gospel. Move their students to diligent and faithful effort and to further preparation for the ministry at Martin Luther College. Bless their work, even as they are blessings to us. We ask all this in your name, O Lord Jesus, for you are the Lord of the Church and the Keeper of its ministry. Amen.

Prayer for the Schools in the WELS Ministerial Education System

Prayer for Martin Luther College

O Jesus, Lord and Savior, we are not worthy of the mercies you show to us each day. Like your disciple, Peter, we so often deny you by our thoughtless and loveless words and actions. Like Peter, we can only weep bitter tears of repentance and plead for your pardon. Yet we rejoice that, like Peter, we may know the blessed relief that comes with your forgiveness, pledged to us in your Word and won for us by your death on the cross.

As a sign of your pardon to Peter, you restored him to your service by urging him, “Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs.” Help us to realize that we also may rejoice in your gift of forgiveness by sharing its blessings with the other members of your flock, and by ensuring that they all may continue to be shepherded with the truths of your holy Word.

To that end, we ask your grace and blessing today upon the faculty and students of Martin Luther College, our synod’s college of ministerial education. In this classrooms and on its campus, young men and women are being prepared for the work of feeding your lambs and shepherding your sheep. Help them to recognize the precious nature of the high calling for which they are preparing. Commit them and their teachers to diligent and faithful effort which will fit them as pastors and teachers who will truly be your gifts to your Church. We commend the school and its entire campus family into your loving care.

And we ask that you would teach us, Lord, as obedient sheep, to follow those you supply to shepherd us in your way. May we support, appreciate, and honor those who serve among us under your divine call. Bless them that they may be blessings to us and, together, we may work to bear your saving blessings into all the world. In your holy name we ask it. Amen.

Prayer for Luther Preparatory School

Lord God, extend your gracious hand and bless the faculty and students of Luther Preparatory School. As teachers guide their students along the path toward the public Gospel ministry, let your presence be felt at each step along the way. Help the faculty to treasure the young lives committed to their care and to employ the powerful and precious tool of your Holy Word in all they say and do. Preserve the young people of the school from the dangerous distractions of this sinful world, and open their minds and hearts to the calling of your full-time ministry. Show each one the way that he or she may best serve you and your holy Church. We commend this school into your hands, O Lord, that in all things you may give it guidance and it may give you glory. In our Savior’s name we pray. Amen.

Other Prayer Suggestions

- In each season of the church year, you may insert a special petition for our ministerial education schools, its faculty or students in to the *Prayer of the Church* formats found in *Christian Worship*, pages 123-131.
- You may wish to pray for a faculty family by name. Names of school staff may be found in the *Synod Yearbook*.
- If you have students in our ministerial education schools, you may wish to include them by name in a special petition in the *Prayer of the Church*.