

“Beginning 2021...On Our Knees”



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“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went out to a solitary place where he prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

As I pulled up my chair at the table in the International Ballroom of the Hilton in Washington D.C., the speaker for the morning approached the podium to address the crowd of approximately 4,000 Diplomats and Religious leaders from 100 countries around the world. As a new pastor, I felt out of place in such an impressive group of world leaders. The President of the United States took his seat at the head table. The guest speaker opened his message with a request, *“I would like to invite every person in the room to push back from your table and get on your knees.”* Nervous laughter filled the room followed by an awkward silence. Then, slowly, the world’s most powerful leaders began to get down on their knees. It moved me deeply to see the President of the United States...on his knees. That powerful image from the National Prayer Breakfast thirty years ago is still with me.

The disciples often saw Jesus...on his knees. Mark tells us, *“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went out to a solitary place where he prayed.”* The Creator of the Universe...on his knees. Before he selected the twelve apostles, Jesus was on his knees all night long in prayer. Immediately following the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus dismissed the crowd, sent the disciples on ahead of him and then retreated to a mountainside to spend the entire night...on his knees. On the last night of his life in a garden outside of Jerusalem, Jesus invited his three closest friends to join him...on their knees. He still invites his followers to join him...on their knees each day.

As we begin a new year in ministry together at Hope, I would like to invite us to spend a few minutes each morning and each evening...on our knees (*figuratively for some of us*) before the Lord for one another, for Hope, for our neighbors and for the world. In his *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther wrote two short prayers for individuals and families to use in the morning after waking and in the evening before going to sleep. He wanted to provide a guide to help believers begin and end each day with the Lord... on their knees (*see attached*).

For the next several weeks during the Season of Epiphany, we will be spending time on our knees with Jesus as he prepares himself for each new day. Like Dr. Luther before us, may we spend a few moments early each morning before breakfast and later each evening before bed...on our knees.

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

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 my 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.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

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.