

February 2012

Prayer Calendar of St. Paul, Lake Mills

Wed. Feb. 1 Children as soon as they can understand ought to be told about Jesus Christ, that they may make him the hero of their young lives. Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Matt 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, & do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." **Matt 16:15-16** "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

**Dear Beautiful Savior, indeed our young ones as well as we need a hero; someone to look to for a role model and an example of what we are to be. That's why we "practice" Christianity. We practice being like you or we try, but LORD, you are and need to be more than just a good role model and hero. We need you as our Savior from sin, death and the power of the devil. You ARE the Savior. You are our Redeemer and the Son of God. We cannot completely be like you, for we still sin, but thanks be to God for you have accomplished what we cannot do. We cannot even believe without your Spirit's work within us through the word and sacraments. Help us remember to train our children in your ways, to bring them to you in baptism and to share your word with them so they know you as their hero, but also as their LORD and Savior who has forgiven them and who they can approach as we do in prayer. Hear us for your sake and in your holy name. Amen.

Thurs. Feb. 2 Let's get an extended weather forecast from a jittery, inconsistent, reddish-brown rodent (someecards) Happy Groundhogs Day!

Psalms 145:15-18 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. **1 Tim. 4:1** The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. **Romans 1:25** They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. **LORD God, we laugh at the notion of people looking to Punxsutawney Phil to tell the weather, but the truth is, many look to creatures and other created things as objects to worship. Others look at the stars, tarot cards, crystals and the like to tell their future. Forgive us when we look for guidance to any thing which is not in agreement with your holy word. Forgive us for making created things a god by giving our hearts to them. Help us to look to you for our guidance, for our help and acceptance. May we be content to live each day knowing you are in charge and will make all things work to our good. We love you – only because you have shown us what it means to love. Amen

Fri. Feb. 3 If you don't embrace God's wisdom, you're going to embrace spiritual death. You either live by it or die without it. There's no other option; there's no neutral ground. That's a strong statement and one that doesn't fit into our culture of political correctness. If this Proverb (8:36) were written today, it would probably be softened up a bit: "God's wisdom is great, but if you disagree with it or it doesn't work for you, that's okay, too. If you find something else that works for you, more power to you. Live and let live." Bob Coy

Prov 8:34-36 Blessed is the man who listens to me watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life & receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death."

**LORD God, Proverbs 8 makes clear your wisdom is much more important than any other knowledge or skill; more precious than silver or gold & more to be treasured than anything else, for your wisdom contains the way of eternal life through Jesus and him alone. Help us to take a strong stand against the arrogance of this world which wants to water down much of your word & accept practices & behaviors which are abhorrent to you & your teachings. We cannot afford to take your word lightly nor can we accept the "political correctness" which goes against your commandments. Our very eternal life depends on knowing & believing what your word teaches. Forgive us for thinking we can have it both ways & thank you for the forgiveness we have in Jesus. May we be strong to stand for him no matter what "earthly wisdom" says. Amen in Jesus.

Sat. Feb. 4 God designed us with an insatiable longing for Him. In the face of this bursting forth of longing God, everything else suddenly retreats. What is most vital about us is our vitality for God. Robert W. Kelleman

Psalms 42:1-2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? **Ps 63:1** O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

****Dear Almighty God, we all have a need for you because of sin. As sinful humans we have deep longings to be filled, yet we don't recognize how to fill these spiritual hunger pangs and often search in wrong places. Thank you for searching us out, just as you searched for Adam and Eve when they lost their perfect relationship with you in the Garden. Help us to always recognize our need for daily relationship with you in the Word and the wonderful blessing we have for communion with you through the sacrament of holy communion. May we partake of this gift often. Help others to come to you for nourishment instead of looking to the things of this world for fulfillments. Until the time we will worship eternally Amen**

Sun. Feb. 5 Let your faith, then, deal not with yourself, but with God--not with your perplexity, but with His wisdom--not with your difficulty, but with His power--not with your need, but with His wealth--not with your vileness and ingratitude, but with His great love, grace, and all-sufficient merit treasured in Christ Jesus. Octavius Winslow

Gen 18:14 *Is anything too hard for the Lord* **Jer 32:27** *"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"*

****Dearest Heavenly Father, when my faith or lack of faith puts up a barrier between you and me, forgive me and help me to run to your holy word for comfort and peace. There I find riches of promise fulfilled where I no longer feel the need to trust in myself. There I am no longer confused, because your wisdom and mightiness are so evident. There your Holy Spirit convinces me of your love and grace, found in my Savior, Jesus. There I see what little trouble I have, if I have a God who can, will and has met all my needs in Jesus. Forgive my doubt, my lack of faith and keep me strong in you. Amen**

Mon. Feb. 6 Nothing is too difficult for the Lord, and He delights in giving good things to His children. The question for His children is will we believe that God can and that according to God's perfect wisdom and timing that God will. When we believe God and turn our needs over to Him great rest, joy, and peace can be ours in Him. rbt.com

Isaiah 49:4-5 *But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God." And now the Lord says--he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength.* **Psalms 56:3-5** *When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me.*

****Heavenly Father, only you know the outcome of my plans. Thank you for always knowing what is best and for doing what is best for me and my loved ones. Nothing is too small or too great for you to accomplish. Forgive me for the many times I have doubted you and for the times I've ignored the things you want me to do. May I take all my needs and concerns to you in prayer and leave them with you. "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." Joseph Scriven: "What a Friend we Have in Jesus" Amen in your name**

Tues. Feb 7 Never give up, my friends! Do not give in to the deceitful lies of the enemy! Don't forget the enemy has ulterior motives and that it is in his best interest that you do give up in despair. Because of this, he will never stop painting vivid picture of raw circumstance to bring you down. Always stay close to Jesus, so that you are always in the center of His will, and remember that you cannot judge the fruits of your work by what you see around you! It is always possible that the goal you think you are to accomplish is "too small for you", and that God proposes that through you, Salvation is brought to the "Ends of the Earth"! Lyn Charffart--

Isaiah 49:6 *"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

**** Dear LORD Jesus, it was "too small a thing" for you to save only the chosen people of Israel. You have been a Light to us, the Gentile nation, as well. May we never forget to tell your message to the world, whether it be to our neighbors and co-workers, or through our gifts of money to our local congregation or for mission work. Fill us with your Spirit's power that we might do you're will in any and all our callings. May the Light of faith which the Spirit has ignited, shine brightly in all we do to bring others closer to you. Forgive us for times of discouragement and times we have ignored preaching and your world.**

(Lyn's prayer) Dear Lord, as I strive to do Your will, may I keep my eyes closed to circumstantial evidence, but stay focused on You instead! May I remember that just as in Isaiah's day, success is not always judged from the responses we see in the here and now. Instead of giving into the deceptions of the enemy, may I learn to take every thought captive in obedience to Jesus, ever placing my trust in the promises of Your Word, even if it means trusting in what I do not see! Amen in Jesus.

Wed. Feb. 8 You can talk to God because God listens. Your voice matters in heaven. He takes you very seriously. When you enter his presence, the attendants turn to you to hear your voice. No need to fear that you will be ignored.

Even if you stammer or stumble, even if what you have to say impresses no one, it impresses God—and he listens. He listens to the painful plea of the elderly in the rest home. He listens to the gruff confession of the death-row inmate. When the alcoholic begs for mercy, when the spouse seeks guidance, when the businessman steps off the street into the chapel, God listens. Intently. Carefully. The prayers are honored as precious jewels. Purified and empowered, the words rise in a delightful fragrance to our Lord. **Max Lucado**

Rev. 8:3-5 *Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. **Psalm 141:2** May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.*

**Dear God, why is it I sometimes I forget to pray when I'm in distress, or when I'm confused? Why is it I forget to thank you when events in my life are wonderful and precious! Yet, when I pray, even though I've been unfaithful, I know you hear me. I know you forgive me for the sake of your Son, my Savior and I know you desire to be in communion with me through the word and sacraments as well as in my prayers. Thank you for the forgiveness, the love and the sacrifice which brought me to you. Help me to be more faithful in my prayer and devotional life so that I might know you even more. Amen

Thurs. Feb. 9 **Death is like my car. It takes me where I want to go."** **John Piper**

1 Cor. 15:55-57 *"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Just like our vehicles, we may be run-down and no longer in our prime. The trip home may not be smooth and comfortable, but knowing Jesus is the Way and the angels carry us onward, we will be just fine. Help each of us to accept the end as you will for ourselves and our loved ones. Give us the strength to face any pain or hardship that may be waiting around the corner. Help those in the process of the journey now to say: My Jesus, as Thou wilt. When death itself draws nigh, unto thy wounded side for refuge I would fly. And, clinging to Thee, go where Thou before hast gone. My times are in Thy hand: my Lord, Thy will be done. Benjamin Schmolck

Fri. Feb. 10 **Absence sharpens love, presence strengthens it.** **Benjamin Franklin**

John 13:36 *Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." **Matthew 28:20b.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**Dear LORD Jesus, the disciples didn't "get it" until you left and went to heaven. They finally understood the work of your cross when you arose and ascended, leaving them your Holy Spirit to fill them with the truth and purpose of your coming. In this sense, their love was sharpened and their eyes were opened. You have opened our eyes to your purpose and through your Holy Spirit you have created love in our hearts for you. By your presence in our life, our faith is strengthened. May we share that love with others, making disciples, *baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Sat. Feb. 11 **You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.** **Sam Keen**

Rom 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **Matt 11:28-29** Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

**Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need in Thee to find, Lamb of God, I come, I come. Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come. Charlotte Elliott . Lord, you see me just as I am: sinful, needy, without a hope of heaven except by your grace & mercy. Yet you see me washed clean through the blood of the Lamb. Thank you. May I see others as you see them, Dear Savior, and love them as you do. Forgive my selfishness and unwillingness to accept others who are not like me. Open my heart, Holy Spirit, to follow your lead; to speak to others the words of healing & love, the bread of life from your Gospel message and to live my life forgiving others as you have forgiven me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Sun, Feb. 12 The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart. Helen Keller

Psalm 16:9-11 *my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

**LORD God, fill my heart with your love. May I understand fully what love is all about built on the foundation of Christ's sacrificial love for me. As your Spirit has worked faith within through the Gospel message, may I ever grow closer to you by study of your Holy Word and partaking of the Lord's supper. Help each of us in our congregation to love you more. Amen

Mon. Feb. 13 Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals.

J. Isham

Galatians 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. James 1:18-19* He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

**Thank you Dear LORD for the wonderful relationships you provide in family members, church members, neighbors, friends and co-workers. Help each of us to treat one another with respect, honoring our differences and actively to each other listening. How fun it is to share good times and to bear one another's pain. May our hearts reflect the Holy Spirit's presence as we look to your word to fulfill our needs and celebrate our good times. Hear us for the sake of Jesus our Savior. Amen

Tues. Feb. 14 Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Your mother and I had it, we had roots that grew towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two. Louis de Bernieres

Ephes. 5:25, 31 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."*

**In sickness & in health, through poverty or wealth, LORD may our marriage vows be true promises that we take seriously. Help all couples to remain faithful to you & one another. On this Valentine's Day, show us all; husbands & wives, parents & children, friends & relatives what true love means. May we understand the sacrificial love you had & still have for us & live to share that love & your love story of commitment for life with everyone we know. We love because you first loved us. Amen

Wed. Feb. 15 God runs when he sees the son coming home from the pig trough. When the addict steps out of the alley. When the teen walks away from the party. When the ladder-climbing executive pushes back from the desk, the spiritist turns from idols, the materialist from stuff, the atheist from disbelief, and the elitist from self-promotion ... When prodigals trudge up the path, God can't sit still. Heaven's throne room echoes with the sound of slapping sandals and pounding feet, and angels watch in silence as God embraces his child. Max Lucado

Luke 15:20 *So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."*

**Dear Heavenly Father, how I love the story of the prodigal son and the vision of the Father running to meet his wayward son, now filled with regret and repentance! Thank you for saving each and every one of us from the pig sty of our sinful lives; for restoring and making us sons and daughters of the King through the saving work of your Son, our brother and Savior, Jesus Christ. All this you do for me because you love me and have forgiven me. Thank you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Thurs. Feb. 16 My great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your failure.

Abraham Lincoln

2 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed & who correctly handles the word of truth. Col 3:23-24* Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

**Thank you, dear Heavenly Father for the example of hard work and dedication many of us saw in our parents. As we see some politicians stand up for what they believe, even in the face of much persecution; as we know of many immigrants from the early 1900s who gave up family and homeland to make a new start here in America, as we today hear of missionaries who work in far-away and dangerous positions and those who labor in our inner-cities to bring a better life to the poor, the hurting and those who do not know their Savior, we are put to shame. Forgive us for giving up when things get tough. Help us to strive to make a difference in the lives of others; to stand up again when we've fallen and to rise above the "failures" we have in life, using them as growth experiences to develop the gifts you've given us to serve. Amen in our Savior's name

Fri. Feb. 17 Which one of us hasn't looked on a newborn baby with amazement and wondered at the exquisite delicacy of each limb, facial feature, fingernail or eyelash? Especially if that baby is our own. It is our responsibility and joy to look at those babies and delight in their perfectly formed tiny hands and feet and then worship the one who created those parts with infinite wisdom, care and direction. **Carol L Baldwin**

Isaiah 29:23 *When they see among them their children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.* **Psalm 104:24** *How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

**Dearest Heavenly Father, forgive us for not treating each life as a precious gift from you. The wonder of a human birth; the absolute greatness of your creation in allowing a child to be formed within the womb of a woman is simply too marvelous for us to comprehend; yet it is treated with such a mundane attitude by the world. So many priceless lives have been cut short by the abortionists hand; so many women cry bitter tears of remorse and would-be fathers live in regret and self-loathing for allowing these murders. Forgive and heal, LORD, and help us to turn the hearts of those who do these atrocities to you as their Creator, their preserver and their Savior; The one in whose holy name we pray, Jesus Christ the LORD, Amen.

Sat. Feb. 18 If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter. **George Washington**

Acts. 5: 28-29 *We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men.* **Mark 13:10** *And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.*

**Dearest LORD, thank you for the freedoms we still have in America. Our freedom of speech allows us to preach your holy word, & we are very grateful for that right. We know even if others don't believe it is politically correct to speak against homosexuality & abortion, we must point out these as sins against your law. We ask that you help us to be respectful in our use of this freedom so others do not connect us to the violent & downright nasty groups who harass and slander others with whom they disagree. How out of hand some movements have become all in the name of freedom of speech! Forgive them, LORD and help our law enforcement agencies to carry out their duties as you would and not according to their own wishes and desires. Hear and help our nation to truly be a nation under God, the true, Triune God in whose name we come. Amen

Sun. Feb. 19 Adam and Eve did eat the fruit of that tree, they did disobey God, they did invite sin into their existence, and they did initiate the process of death and decay. God's word of warning came to pass, and we still see the evidence everywhere we turn. Earth isn't a perfect place. It's a perishing place. On their own, things generally don't get better. They become worse. They perish. This is perfectly consistent with what the Bible stated in the very beginning: Our world is getting worse, not better. So the next time you see an example of earth's imperfection, let it remind you of the Bible's perfect presentation of truth. **Bob Coy**

Genesis 2:16-17 *And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."* **Genesis 3:6** *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

**Heavenly Father, Creator & Preserver, we ask you to open the eyes of the many scientists who have been blinded by the false beliefs of evolution; for those who hold onto theories of earth's birth which take much more faith than believing Creation. All of the earth points to the truths of Holy Scripture. Give understanding & faith to those who will take the step to read the pages of the Bible. Then give them courage & a platform to stand against the wicked & false teachings which are so confusing to baby Christians & those who might otherwise seek the truth. As all will stand at the judgment seat someday to answer for their behaviors, may teachers & professors be forgiven & know the truth which will set them free in Jesus. Amen

Mon. Feb. 20 "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves." **Abraham Lincoln**

Psalm 33:10-12a *The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. is the nation whose God is the Lord,*

**God of our fathers, whose almighty hand Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies Our grateful songs before Thy throne arise.
Thy love divine hath led us in the past, In this free land by Thee our lot is cast,
Be Thou our Ruler, Guardian, Guide and Stay, Thy Word our law, Thy paths our chosen way. Amen**

Tues. Feb. 21 Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." John Adams

2 Chron. 7:14 *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 1 Peter 2:10* Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, Be Thy strong arm our ever sure defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase, Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.
Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way, Lead us from night to never ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine, And glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.**

Wed. Feb. 22 It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible. George Washington

Ephesians 5:15-17 *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. James 1:5* If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him

**Dearest LORD, we ask your wisdom for our leaders. Our nation is indeed in need of your help and wisdom from on high. There is so much unrest in all areas of this nation of America and throughout the world. There are so many hurting people with financial concerns; many whose loved ones are in the military service and others who fear the future because of many other problems. Our national debt is rising, there are fights between the members of our congress and it seems lies and dishonesty are so commonplace in government, it's difficult to know who to believe. We know things will continue to grow worse on this earth until you come back to take us to yourself for Jesus' sake. Until that glorious day, we ask you to keep us in faith & to help us encourage & build one another up in your Holy Spirit's power. Thank you for loving & dying for us. Amen

Thurs. Feb. 23 When you love someone, you naturally want to do things for them that will bring them pleasure.

Preparing a favorite meal, or surprising someone with a fresh bouquet of fragrant flower

Gen 29:20 *Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.*

Ephes. 2:3-5 *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

**I pray, Father, that out of your glorious riches you may strengthen me with power through your Spirit in my inner being, so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith. And I pray that I, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that I may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all I ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within me, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [Adapted from Ephesians 3:16-21]

Fri. Feb. 24 "And in the end it is not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years." Abraham Lincoln

Psalms 139:16b *All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

**Heavenly Father, what an awesome thought to know you have had a plan for my life before I was ever born. You knew exactly what I would be doing this very moment before my parents even knew about my existence. How wonderful to know I have a God who is so involved in my every day and every thought. Help me to live each as the last and every moment as the first. Show me the purpose for each day that I do not waste one minute of the gift of time you have given me. May I leave this earth, at your appointed time, hearing the words, (Matt 25:23) 'Well done, good & faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Amen in Jesus

Sat. Feb. 25 God know what you need and where you'll be...Trust him. "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes" (Matthew 6:34. The Message)

Matthew 6:33-34 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**My prayer, Father, is that you would help me to live in the here and now, not concerned about past hurts, failures and regrets, not worrying about the future, but that I live life to the fullest each day; learning from the past and growing for future work in your Kingdom. As I trust you, use me to share my Savior's love and his message of forgiveness. Amen in his name.

Sun. Feb. 26 “Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren’t very new after all.” Abraham Lincoln

Eccles. 1:9-10 *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, “Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. **Rev. 21:5** He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new **2 Cor. 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

**How depressing, LORD, to have the world view of life, which Solomon stated in such desperate tones in Ecclesiastes! Indeed if this life were all we had to look forward to, there would be reason for such a negative and hopeless outlook. But you, Jesus, have made all things new in your saving work on the cross. We have a reason to live in the hope of an eternal life where there is no pain, sorrow or trouble. We have the assurance that even when we mess up here on earth, you see us as pure and clean, forgiven and made whole through Jesus, our LORD and Savior, in whose holy name we pray. Amen.

Mon. Feb. 27 It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt.” Abraham Lincoln

Proverbs 15:7 *The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools. **17:28** a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. **18:2** A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions. **Eccles. 10:12** Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.*

**LORD God, when I have an opinion to share about something, help me to check it at the door of your throne first. Let me weigh my words carefully first before speaking them. Let my words be truth spoken in love. May they be words of healing, in the correct context and at the appropriate time. Help me to study my Savior’s method of speaking so I am wise in what I say & spot-on with the message I am giving. If I must be thought of as a fool, let it be for the sake of the gospel in the eyes of the world which considers all things of Christ foolish. I am glad to be considered a fool for my Savior’s sake. In his name Amen

Tues. Feb. 28 “The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend.” Abraham Lincoln

Matthew 5:44 *Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **Romans 12:20** On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink .In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”*

**LORD, Jesus, show me how to love my enemies. When I have been injured by someone physically, emotionally or in any other way, may I respond to them as you would; not making myself a door-mat, which is a “victim” but loving them with the sacrificial love you have shown me. May I protect myself from future hurts, coming to you for guidance and direction on how to face them in love, armed with the Holy Spirit’s power. Show me what I might do to win them over to you by prayer and by kindness. Make them hungry for your love through me & thirsty for the Gospel message of peace, joy & hope in you. Amen

Wed. Feb. 29 Happy Leap Year Day! Leap Years are needed to keep our calendar in alignment with the Earth's revolutions around the sun

Luke 6:20-23 *Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. “Rejoice in that day and **leap** for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.*

** Dearest Jesus, only 2 short months ago we were singing, **My heart for very joy doth leap, My lips no more can silence keep; I, too, must sing with joyful tongue That sweetest ancient cradle-song:** Now as winter goes on and on and we hope for Spring, keep our hearts joy filled with you. Whether it be a “common or a leap year” may we understand you are in charge, keeping this world spinning just as you did when you spoke the first words of creation so many years ago. Can anyone doubt there is a God who loves and cares for us when we consider the works of your hands? Be with those young Christians in secular fields of education and in the work place as they seek to live faithful to the message of Scripture in the face of unbelieving professors or co-workers. Holy Spirit, lead, guide and protect in Jesus Amen.

Thurs. March 1 It might seem pointless to try to advocate for celibacy among single people in the twenty-first century. It might seem like a battle long lost. Do it anyway. It’s never too late to relearn God’s ways. If even one heart is changed, if even one life is blessed, it’s worth it. Whose word and ways can you trust more than God’s? E who sent His own Son as a sacrificial lamb to take away the sin of the world isn’t going to promote behaviors what will hurt us. The things He forbids really are destructive and painful. His will is good; His commandments protect precious things. Like marriage. Like your body. Mark Jeske

1 Cor. 6:18 *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*

**LORD God, it does seem hopeless to stop the tide of sexual immorality in our country, but despair is of Satan. Help all Christian parents to teach their children the Blessings of sexual purity and your teachings on purity. May young people recognize the social and personal costs to immoral living, including inconvenient pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and many other regrets. Forgive those who have engaged in these sins and help to restore them to lives more pleasing to you. Help our society to recognize your commandments as Blessings to a better life here on earth and as a mirror to reflect the need of a Savior which you have provided in your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose holy name we pray. Amen.

Fri. March 2 **When we see people making fools of themselves in public or doing something embarrassing or illegal, our first response is to dissociate ourselves, "I'm not with them". One of the most wonderful things that Jesus Christ, our Savior, does for us is to choose to be identified with us. Not only did He take on human flesh just like ours and then stay human, but he takes particular delight in bonding Himself to us and us to Him, soul and body. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper...He forms a communion with us. Mark Jeske**

1 Cor. 10:16 *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*

**Dear LORD, Pastor Jeske calls the Sacrament of Holy Communion "a personal physical encounter with the Son of God." WOW! When I think of this, I become so humbled! To think you are not ashamed to be associated with me, knowing all my stupid behaviors, my sinful thoughts and my fumbling actions. Thank you for the forgiveness you have given me through your body and blood on the cross and for the love you remind me of every time I commune at your altar. Keep me faithful in attending church, communing with the saints and study of your Holy Word. Hear me for your sake. Amen.

Sat. March 3 **People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be." Abraham Lincoln**

Hab 3:17-19 *Though the fig tree does not bud & there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails & the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen & no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.*

**Heavenly Father, how very inspiring it is to read these last verses of Habakkuk where he makes up his mind through the pain and the scarcity of physical blessings, he decides to still be joyful. You were Habakkuk's strength and the force which enabled him to rejoice even through the injustices, wars, plagues and evils of the day. Thank you for being our strength as well; one who raises us up to new heights of praise and adoration because you are the God of all and have been our salvation through the work of your Son, our Savior in whose holy name we pray. Forgive the times we look only to this present situation & forget to rejoice in you. Although this life is not perfect, we choose to live in joy through the Spirit. Amen