

# ***Worship at Home***

## ***Sunday, January 25, 2026***

*Because weather prohibits us from gathering in person, we invite you to spend some time in prayer and reflection. Below are suggested prayers, scripture, and links to musical offerings. Choose any or all to help guide your time of prayer. (Please note: we do not control the ads that may appear before the start of each YouTube video or the suggested videos that may come up at the end of video we have linked; kindly skip past them.)*

### **Opening Prayer**

O loving God,  
to turn away from you is to fall,  
to turn toward you is to rise,  
and to stand before you is to abide forever.  
Grant us, dear God,  
in all our duties your help;  
in all our uncertainties your guidance;  
in all our dangers your protection;  
and in all our sorrows your peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**  
—Attributed to Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

### **Opening Song for Meditation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfrsR65sOdE>

“O Love” led by the Hope College chapel choir at the Calvin Symposium on Worship in 2025

### **Scripture**

Psalm 139:1-18 (NRSVUE version)

*To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.*

- <sup>1</sup> O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- <sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O Lord, you know it completely.
- <sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
<sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and night wraps itself around me,"<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.  
<sup>13</sup> For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.  
<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup> Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>17</sup> How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
<sup>18</sup> I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end<sup>[c]</sup>—I am still with you.

As you read the scripture passage today, I invite you to slow down and engage in a mediative approach to reading scripture called *Lectio Divina*. UCC pastor, Rev. Elizabeth Diley gives these instructions:

*Lectio divina* is an old practice of reading and reflecting on Scripture. You'll read one of these texts a few times during this practice, either silently or aloud.

The first time you read the Scripture passage, do so slowly and meditatively. Listen for the word or phrase that jumps out at you, that speaks to you, or that hooks you. Maybe it already has a deeper meaning for you, or maybe it's a surprise. Hold onto that word or phrase for a moment. Let it roll around in your heart for a bit. Or repeat it a few times to get the feel of its vibrations in your mouth and throat.

The second time you read the passage, do so with that word or phrase in your heart. Why is it speaking to your life right now? Why did you connect with it? Do not strain for answers, but let yourself gently ponder it as you hear the Scripture passage again. Sit in silence for a few minutes as you continue to ponder.

The third time you read the passage, do so in a spirit of prayer. What is Christ calling of you in response to this word or phrase? Is the Spirit asking you to let something go, or pick something up, or to be attentive in a new way? Reflect on this for a time.

At the end, thank God for this time of reflection and contemplation. Perhaps even write down that word or phrase and continue to reflect on it this week. If you are with others, you may want to share what you noticed in the scripture with one another.

### **(option) The Examen**

A few weeks ago, I described the reflection process called Examen. Here are the instructions on how to look for God's presence in your life using the ancient prayer practice of Examen:

#### **How Can I Pray?<sup>1</sup>**

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer.

**1. Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

**2. Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

**3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you

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<sup>1</sup> Information on The Ignatian Examen process taken from <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray>

experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

**4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

**5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God.

## **Praying for the World**

1 Peter 5:7 invites us to cast all our cares on Jesus because he care for us. We invite you to spend time praying for the needs of the church, our community, and our world.

We remember Westminster members with special concerns:

Al Hibbert who has been discharged from the hospital and is at Taylorville Memorial Rehab and Deb Coontz who is now at home.

Susan Shea at Springfield Suites and Sue Donels at Concordia Rehab.

The family and friends of Rev. Frank N. Gready who died on Tuesday January 20th.

We pray for Westminster as we begin our mission study. That God would open our eyes and our hearts to the needs of the world and how specifically God might be inviting us reach out our community and world with both a message of love and support for people's physical and spiritual

needs.

**(Option):** A sung call to prayer with prayer litany interspersed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIS1ZGINrE>

Lord Listen to Your Children Praying (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship)

**(option)** Use this prayer from the PCU(USA) Book of Common Worship to guide you in a time of prayer for others:

Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry.

Whoever believes in me will never thirst.

So we pray to the triune God who is the source of all life.

You are the bread of life, O God, and we give you thanks.

You create all things good,

and you nourish your creation with tender gifts.

Thank you for all the ways that you breathe life into our lives.

We hear your words, O Bread of Life, and yet we are hungry.

We are hungry for peace:

for an end to the violence in our neighborhoods and in our world.

For people who hear gunshots in the night

and bombings in the day,

we are hungry for peace, O God.

We are hungry for justice:

for an end to the oppression in our nation and in our world.

For people who suffer because of racism, sexism, poverty,

and the fear of the other,

we are hungry for justice, O God.

We hear your words, O Cup of Blessing, and yet we are thirsty.

We are thirsty for righteousness:

We are thirsty to know your truth.

We are thirsty to feel your presence.

We are thirsty for your Spirit to quench our parched souls.

We are thirsty for righteousness, O God.

We pray for those in our community who thirst this day . . .

*Lift your specific concerns*

O Lord, you are the bread of life,

and you nourish and sustain our souls.

We give thanks for who you are

and offer our whole selves to you;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**(option)** Play this video and meditate on the ways Jesus knows our struggles and can help us through difficult times:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q20UvFqM0Hs>

“Not a Stranger” by the Porter’s gate as shared at The Calvin Symposium for Worship 2025

### **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 debts,  
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but  
deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power  
and the glory, forever.

All: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn: O God, Our Help in Ages Past

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_Gdb3KxTBY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_Gdb3KxTBY)

First-Plymouth Church Lincoln Nebraska

*If you would like to give in support of Westminster’s Ministry and Mission please visit our website for instructions on how to give online, by phone, or in person.*

<https://www.wpcspi.org/ways-to-give.html>