

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY MINISTRY UPDATE FALL 2026

I came home from a meeting at church to some good news. My wife reported that around our dinner table, our son, Josiah, had led the prayer at his insistence. He was maybe 3 years old.

“Mumble...mumble...Amen.” The only thing Marie understood was “Amen!” But the model of prayers that he had heard had taught him to pray that first prayer. He had heard mom and dad pray.

Where did you learn how to pray? I think about the disciples asking of Jesus, *“Lord, teach us to pray as John (the baptizer) taught his disciples.”* (Luke 11:1) They asked and he gave them His prayer, the Lord’s Prayer.

A friend of mine told me that she considers being awake in the middle of the night, thinking about things, as an invitation to pray. To *“cast all our anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:7) Please don’t miss the word **“all.”** The Lord loves to hear our prayers of Thanksgiving as well.

The world is filled with anxiety, worry, complaining, and even manipulation. Sometimes those things can take over my life. Yours? Do we struggle with those issues and sins in the Church?

God’s answer to the mess we make? Again, it is Jesus. *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way, as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:15,16)

The older I get, the more I appreciate the prayers of the church. Are you always sure what you should be praying for? Not my will, but Thine be done. We join the people in the Gospels, and through the ages, who have cried out, “Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.”

Recently, I met with my eighth-grade teacher (91-year-old, Mr Bartels), and we were reminiscing about our Lutheran School. Both he and the school remain a tremendous gift. To be honest, I always thought we had too much memory work including... Bible passages, Luther’s Small Catechism... and hymn stanzas, especially the hymn stanzas! Throughout my pastoral ministry and my life those have been great resources.



Northern Illinois District
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Sometimes after a long day, when I am tired, the prayers that end my day I had to memorize. “Lord Jesus who dost love me, Oh, spread Thy wings above me, And shield me from all alarm, Though evil will assail me, Thy mercy will not fail me: I rest in Thy protecting arms.” (TLH 554) Or, *“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”* (Psalm 4:8)

Sometimes, we have to pray hard prayers including, “Pray for your enemies.” Out of the mouth of our Savior, who not only prayed for them, but He died for them and rose again for them... and you. If we do not pray for them, we will be very tempted to hate them.

We end our prayers in Jesus’ name. **He covers our imperfect prayers.**

It is always humbling to hear congregations pray for me in public worship, usually right after President Harrison. Thank you! It is an encouragement when someone says to me, “I am praying for you.” Thank you! **I am praying for you.**

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