

**A Sermon for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost
July 27, 2025**



Come to New Life!

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Click Here for today's Readings:
[Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – The Episcopal Church](#)

Luke 11: 1-13

Deep in our hearts

Back in the day, when I was a hospital chaplain, I sometimes visited patients who were unconscious. I had no idea if they were aware of my presence, but I usually took hold of their hand, to communicate by feel. Around Christmas time, I often softly sang some quiet Christmas carols to them – Silent Night, Away in a Manger, O Little Town of Bethlehem – and often the patients would stir at the familiar music, and would join their voices with mine. This always moved me greatly, as I thought of how deep down in their consciousness these comforting words and melodies lay, coming up again in a quiet visit. One patient suddenly started saying the words to the Apostles Creed, surely conjuring a memory from her days of faithful church attendance. Occasionally, as a patient neared death, I would read the 23rd Psalm, in the King James translation, and surrounded by the comfort of the familiar, the patient would often “walk into the valley of the shadow” peacefully.

We carry these words deep in our hearts. We became accustomed to them when we were young, and they never leave us. They are right there, to guide us through life and to ease us into the next world.

The Lord’s Prayer is like that too. Most of us have it memorized in the King James version, and I would never change the wording we use here into something more modern, because we all need the comfort of the familiar. It comes up every week at a crucial moment in our Eucharistic liturgy. Introduced by the words, And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say...” It does indeed take boldness to pray this familiar prayer. When we have completed the prayer, the Body of Christ is broken, fractured, ready to come into our bodies, as we too become the Body of Christ.

You have told me that your former rector Rev Stephanie Pace encouraged you to join hands when you prayed the Lord’s Prayer, and you were still doing that when I came here in 2018. I found it a lovely gesture of connection. And I was sorry that it fell into disuse during COVID when, alas, we were afraid to touch one another. If you feel the desire to connect by touch, I urge you to resume this beautiful gesture – assuming your neighbors in the pews are willing.

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus is teaching this prayer to his disciples. He says, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.” Hearing this translation, we are jolted out of our rote memory and invited to consider the unfamiliar word construction. It seems a bit abrupt, but it certainly covers all the bases: We hallow, or bless, God’s name and pray for the coming of God’s kingdom. We ask for the practical, food for each

day. And then we get to our behavior – forgive us our sins – oh yes, please! – and we will work to forgive the sins of others. And please keep us safe.

That's it. Bless God and God's kingdom, feed us, forgive us, and keep us safe. I think we hear and say all those essentials every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. I think it lies deep in our hearts, ready to be summoned all the time.

So, does it work? Do we receive all those things? Absolutely. Jesus addresses this, too, saying "Ask and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." This assumes some action on our part. We ask for certain things, but we will get a better response if we make some effort on our own behalf and on behalf of others – knock on the door!. And sometimes it takes patience to wait for the response. And sometimes we are surprised by the response. One priest I knew once said, "Be careful what you pray for!" You might get it!" Well, I prefer to think that our prayers are always answered, even if it isn't the answer we are hoping for. It may, however, be just what we need.

We have been praying the Lord's Prayer for 2000 years. It lies deep in our hearts. Perhaps you have had experiences while praying the Lord's Prayer. In my own experience, it is an essential part of my day. Without praying it at our morning devotions, my life is missing something. When Norm and I pray it together, I feel anchored for the day.

I invite you to tell us about your experiences with this prayer.

Charlyn Bridges responds:

During son Scott's lengthy hospital stays (2016 and again in 2017) we would gather around his bed before we left for the evening and hold hands as we prayed The Lord's Prayer together. It brought us back to the familiar practice that we shared with our New Life family as we worshipped together.