

The Great Sending

Prayer & Activity Resource Guide

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Southeastern District-LCMS*

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Introduction

The Spiritual Life Team of the Southeastern District-LCMS has compiled this prayer guide as an accompaniment to Rev. Dr. Will Sohn's book The Great Sending. Our hope is that as you and your congregation work through the 42 Bible studies, you will use the prompts and suggested activities to further immerse yourselves in prayer for the *Missio Dei*.

Each page corresponds to one of the Bible studies for The Great Sending (starting on pg. 51 in the book). There are six prompts for each study. The corresponding Scripture texts and a guiding thought from the book are included.

The Appendix provides some activities which may enhance your study and prayer time.

The guide can be downloaded and printed in a booklet format (see se.lcms.org).

It is our prayer that these suggestions will draw you even deeper into the love of Christ which compels us to be ambassadors, sharing the gift of God's redeeming, redemptive grace with our neighbors, our community, and the world.

Study 1—The Sending Christ

Jesus said to them again. "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." – John 20:21

"To be sent means we come from the One with nail prints on His hands and feet, the One forever breathing life into His church and its witness." – The Great Sending, page 53.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Spend time praying John 20:21 (see Appendix for ideas on praying with Scripture, *lectio divina*)
- ✚ Just as Christ came back for Thomas, give praise to Him for His love for each and every person.
- ✚ Pray for peace today. Peace in your own heart, peace in the Church, peace in the world.
- ✚ Ask the Spirit to make you bold in your witness today, fully aware that you are "sent by Christ".
- ✚ Pray for your neighbors near and far today. If you do not know the name of the neighbor next to you, introduce yourself.
- ✚ Give thanks to God for the Spirit's power in challenging, shaking, and sending the Church.

For Study 34 - Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

For Study 33 - Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling

Hark, the voice of Jesus calling,
“Who will go and work today?

Fields are white and harvests waiting—
Who will bear the sheaves away?”

Loud and long the Master calleth;
Rich reward He offers thee.

Who will answer, gladly saying,
“Here am I, send me, send me”?

Some take up His task in morning,
To their Lord responding soon;

Some are called in heat of midday, others late in afternoon;
Even as the sun is setting, some are sent into the fields,

There to gather in the bounty
that God’s Word so richly yields.

For as rain and snow from heaven water seeds in dusty soil,

Causing them to bud and flower,
giving bread to those who toil;

So the Lord sends forth His promise,
Words of life and joy and peace—

Never void to Him returning,
bearing fruit with great increase.

Hearken to the Lord whose coming
Marks the time when grace shall end,

When with His angelic reapers He in glory shall descend.

Soon the night, the final harvest;
Soon the time for work shall cease.

Then the souls His grace has garnered
Shall enjoy His Sabbath peace.

Study 2 - Who Do People Say Jesus Is?

*He (Jesus) said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” –
Matthew 16:15*

“The message of the *Missio Dei* is to introduce Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, to those who do not yet know Him.” –
The Great Sending, page 55.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Ask the Spirit to open your eyes and ears today that you may see and hear your neighbor’s needs. Anticipate those needs. How will you respond?
- ✚ Look for where/ways you see God at work in your life today. Say a prayer of thanks to our Living God.
- ✚ Reflect on the kind of relationship you would have with a non-believer that would prompt them to ask you who Jesus is. Pray for opportunities to develop such friendships.
- ✚ Pray: Lord, give me a heart that is open to your transformational Word.
- ✚ Pray: Lord, give me the insight to declare who you truly are to those around me.
- ✚ Pray: Lord, help me see you at work in my life and how that can spur me on to fulfill your mission for my life.

Study 3 - Christ Crucified

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. – John 19:18

“In proclaiming Christ, those on His mission must be careful never to present the cross as defeat and the resurrection as a victory. Christ is glorified in both; in both Christ is victorious.”
– The Great Sending, page 60.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✝ Pray: Lord, help me to not be embarrassed by your willingness to die a martyr’s/criminal’s death, but share with others the glorious way you willingly sacrificed yourself for all humankind.
- ✝ Pray: Lord, let me lift high your cross as a sign of victory to all those around me.
- ✝ Pray: Lord, help me share your cross as a symbol of the true victory over sin, death, and the devil
- ✝ This week reflect and pray with words of the hymn, “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” (words in Appendix).
- ✝ Use a Visual Prayer practice (see Appendix) to form a prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus to die on the cross.
- ✝ Spend some time with a cross that has special meaning to you. How does it represent victory? Take a few moments of quiet to talk to God about what you’re thinking.

of the greatest misconceptions held by Christians today is that men and women do not want to know God. But wherever I go around the world, I find ample proof that just the opposite is true. The Holy Spirit has created a hunger for God in the hearts of millions.

We Christians have in our possession the greatest gift available to mankind: God's gift of eternal life, which we received with Jesus Christ at our spiritual birth (John 3:16). Christ is risen! We serve a living Savior! He not only lives within us in all His resurrection power, but He also has assured us of eternal life.

PRAYER: *Dear Lord, how we praise and thank You, and worship You for Your greatest of all gifts, in sending the Lord Jesus to be our Savior and Friend and for dying in our place on the cross to pay the price for our sins. And thank You Father, for the many blessings that You shower over each one of us day by day. Give us grateful hearts and a willingness and desire to share with others the grace and mercy that You have daily given us without measure.*

Help us Lord, to demonstrate your great love and grace to all those that cross our paths today. May we be ready and willing to be faithful witnesses of you and to give an answer for what we believe, so that many may also come to know you and to accept Jesus as their own personal Savior and friend, because they saw Him in us.

Help us to edify and uplift other members of Your body and in all things to be Your hands and feet, Your eyes and ears, and Your heart of love in all we say and do today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Study 19

An additional commentary on Study 19 by Rev. Falak Robson, assistant pastor of Evangelistic Outreach, Emmanuel, Baltimore, MD. Pastor Robson's context of ministry among Muslim people provides another voice of the importance of being a witness in one's "neighborhood".

Question: By His words, "You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48), Jesus invited all of His disciples to participate with Him in His Mission. They were to "witness" to others what Jesus did (His death and resurrection) and what he was presently and actively doing in the world (proclaiming His forgiveness to all). How is our "witness" to Jesus' work the same as that of the earliest disciples? How is it different?

Answer: Apostles were the eye witnesses of Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. They themselves were the first called for the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus said to them that "And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning". This personal witness of the first preachers of Christianity was the secret of their great power over men's hearts. The disciples were to be "witnesses" of their Lord's work and teaching, and above all of His resurrection.

Jesus Christ's last command to the Christian community was to make disciples; the command is for me to proclaim the Good News to the Muslim community living in Pakistan and to teach the truth of salvation to nominal Christians.

This command is the responsibility of every man and woman who professes faith in Christ as Lord and for me too.

The people of the world are truly hungry for the gospel. One

Study 4 — A Christ for All Peoples

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. – Luke 4:18-19

"As prophets like Isaiah had long promised, our Lord Jesus was sent by His Father to redeem and restore His people as His own. His people include you and me. His people include vastly more than you and me, His Divine mission encompasses the whole world." – The Great Sending, page 64.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Reflect on those things which cause you to feel entitled to receive God's grace and mercy. Repent of these things and pray for God's forgiveness.
- ✠ Reflect on ways you can show mercy. Be as specific as possible (to whom? When? How?) Pray for opportunities to show God's mercy to someone today.
- ✠ Pray for missionaries who labor for Christ overseas.
- ✠ Pray: Lord, help me to declare you to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah, come to save the world.
- ✠ Pray: Lord, help me to carry on your mission of proclaiming the good news (Gospel) to the world.
- ✠ Pray: Lord, give me the boldness to fulfill my mission as a "sent one" (apostle) to a world so desperately in need of your good news (Gospel).

Study 5 — Jesus is the Son of God

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. – John 1:34

“Through these two terms (“Son of God” and “Lamb of God”), John tells us what the *Missio Dei* (the mission of God) is – the forgiveness of sins through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God.” – The Great Sending, page 67-68.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect on the phrase, “Jesus, Son of God”. Use a Visual Prayer practice to gather your thoughts. Thank God for sending and revealing His Son, Jesus. (see Appendix for visual prayer ideas)
- ✚ Read John 20:21 slowly, several times. Thank God for the gift of eternal life through faith in Christ the Son of God.
- ✚ Reflect on the phrase “Lamb of God”. What does this phrase mean to you? How would you explain this phrase to a non-believer? What would you say? Pray for the Spirit to help you.
- ✚ In John’s Gospel, John the Baptizer boldly proclaims Jesus as “the Son of God.” In prayer, list other titles and attributes that reflect the work of Jesus in your life and the world.
- ✚ Bring to mind the gift of your own baptism. Praise God for this sacramental gift and for the Holy Spirit within you.
- ✚ Pray for the youngest of these whose baptisms mark them as God’s own children; that they may be brought up in the knowledge of their Savior Jesus.

For Study 15 - What a Friend We Have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
Oh, what needless pain we bear-
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful?
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness-
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior still our refuge-
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He’ll take and shield, thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

For Study 3 - In the Cross of Christ, I Glory

In the cross of Christ, I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.
When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me.
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.
Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

Study 6 - The Mission of God is Accomplished Through Jesus

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”
– John 3:16-17

“The mission of God is powerful. It changes the hearts and lives of people.” – The Great Sending, page 71.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✝ Pray for your congregation and church staff/leaders.
- ✝ Ask God to raise up godly leaders to guide the congregation to be witnesses to the Light.
- ✝ Pray for the Spirit's presence, then brainstorm outreach activities your congregation could do in the next 12 months.
- ✝ Pray that the light of God's church would continue to illuminate increasingly more hearts and lives.
- ✝ God sent His Son and He sends us also. Pray that in your personal mission field at work, home, school, etc. you would experience a renewed zeal as you continue to share Jesus.
- ✝ Praise God for his great love for you in sending His Son, Jesus.

Study 7 - Date with Destiny

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. – 2 Corinthians 5:1

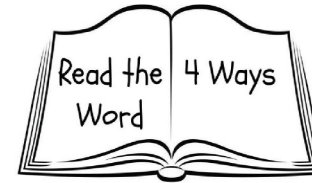
“If your date with destiny has been secured, then you are called to God’s mission as an ambassador for Christ. Because there is no greater love, no better destiny, there is no higher calling for us than to bring others to their date with destiny!”
– The Great Sending, page 74.

Prayer Prompts:

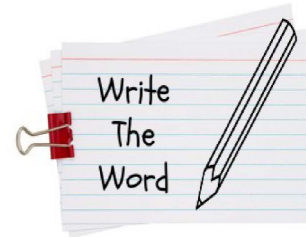
- ✦ Use a Visual Prayer practice to guide your prayer time. (see Appendix for visual prayer ideas)
- ✦ Remember in prayer the names of people you know whose “earthly home” is leaking or being destroyed by illness or the cares of this world.
- ✦ The Merriam-Webster definition of an ambassador is: “an official envoy; an authorized messenger”. Read John 20:21. Pray that you might be an effective ambassador for Christ today.
- ✦ Pray for the lost, that opportunities may arise for a winsome sharing of the Gospel.
- ✦ Reflect on the sheer volume of people that Jesus has come to save. Praise God that you are in that number.
- ✦ Pray for hearts to fathom God’s goodness and hands to do his will.

“Word Doodle”

The Word



Read the Word > 4 Ways
Silently, Whisper, Out Loud
From Another Version



On an index card, write out
the scripture verse in the
version you like best.



On the back side of the
index card, write down the
action words. Using the key
action words, write a short
prayer response.



Keep The Word

Highlight the verse in your
Bible. Post the date some
where close and write The
Great Sending. Mark the
page with the index card.

Practice of Examen

The Examen is a set of introspective prompts for you to follow to help you find the movement of God in all the people and events of our day. It's often done in the evening, looking back over the day, but it can be done at any time. Change the prompts as needed to help you focus on how the Holy Spirit is working in your life.

- 1) Begin with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two; become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy. Quiet your mind and body.
- 2) Thanksgiving
 - What am I especially grateful for as I look back at my day?
- 3) Petition
 - I ask God for the wisdom to know God and to know myself as God sees me.
- 4) Review
 - Where have I felt true joy today?
 - What has troubled me today?
 - What has challenged me today?
 - Where and when did I pause today?
 - Have I noticed God's presence in any of this?
- 5) Response
 - In light of my review, what is my response to the God of my life?
- 6) A Look Ahead
 - As I look ahead, what comes to mind?
 - With what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow?

Study 8 - Born Again...To Bear Witness to the Light

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14

“Our life is not just about working, eating, sleeping, and playing. It's about pointing people to Jesus, the Jesus who was sent to earth by God to be the light of the world.” – The Great Sending, page 79.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✦ Pray for people who live in difficult places – those dealing with addictions, depression, loss of job or relationships, suffering from grief or oppressions of any kind, etc.
- ✦ Several times this week, pray the prayer at the end of Study 8. Then ask the Lord to reveal to you an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with someone.
- ✦ Thank our Heavenly Father for sending us His Son Jesus to be the Light of the world. Ask Him to show you specific ways be a witness who points people to Jesus. Then be on alert for ways that he will answer your prayer.
- ✦ Ask the Lord to give you the opportunity to be His witness and share a personal story of what He has done in your life with someone.
- ✦ Ask the Lord to help you understand and believe that the Good News is not a secret to be kept inside the church doors, but a joyful proclamation to be shared with others outside the church.
- ✦ Think of one person who has been a 'light' for Jesus in your life. Thank God for that person.

Study 9 - Calling of the Disciples/Apostles to Christ's Mission

And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." – Matthew 4:19

"Like Christ, we are called to make disciples, to mend (repair, restore) the nets, to leave our own comfort zones and to go to where the world works, lives, plays, and eats." – The Great Sending, page 82.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect on being in partnership with Christ. Pray that today that partnership will change the way you think, act and speak.
- ✚ Pray for the courage to leave your comfort zone in reaching others for Christ.
- ✚ In your baptism, God claimed you as His own. Give thanks to God for the gift of faith.
- ✚ In what way has Christ changed your life? Talk to Him about it.
- ✚ Who reminds you to follow Jesus? Thank God for that person.
- ✚ The disciples were always learning from Jesus as they followed him. Pray today that you, too, may continue to learn as your study God's Word and partner with Jesus in the *Mission Dei*.

Lectio Divina (sacred reading)

Lectio divina is an ancient prayer method for reading and praying with the Bible.

The Steps of Lectio Divina

1. Choose a text of the Scriptures that you wish to pray.
2. Place yourself in a quiet environment. Calm your anxieties and thoughts, and acknowledge God's presence.
3. Offer a prayer for inspiration and guidance: "*Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my heart and mind to listen to your Word.*"
4. Reading (*lectio*): Read the text slowly and prayerfully, constantly listening for that word that God has prepared for you. Read the same text multiple times to help quiet yourself interiorly and focus on God's voice.
5. Meditation (*meditatio*): When a word or phrase strikes you, stop and rest with it. Repeat the word or phrase to yourself. Allow it to speak to you in a personal way by pondering the word in your heart, reflecting on what it means to you.
6. Prayer (*oratio*): Prayer is your response to God's Word. Formulate a prayer, as a response to God. What do you want to say to the Lord in response to the Word spoken to you?
7. Contemplation (*contemplatio*): Sit still with God, realizing that in this deep and profound relationship, words are not necessary. Be content and at peace with a wordless, quiet rest in God, which brings joy to the heart.
8. Action (*actio*): Having received God's love and grace, we go forth to serve others out of the love we have been given. Our transformation calls us to witness to others; it calls us to selflessly serve our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Visual Prayer

Visual prayer is the practice of slowing down to write, color, or doodle during a focused time of prayer. This includes beginning with a printable image (Print, Color and Pray) or your own hand-drawn design.

This is a prayer tool that results in a concrete, tangible prayer with an image to be recalled in prayerful moments during your day or given to bless someone as a gift of prayer.

For ideas, printables, and other resources, see:
<https://www.visualfaithmin.org/visual-prayer>

For printable Great Sending Worksheets, see:
<https://www.visualfaithmin.org/product-page/the-great-sending-worksheets-by-pat-maier>

Study 10 - The Disciples are Sent to the Towns and Villages

“the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” – Luke 10:2

“How blessed are the sent to be in mission and to go into the towns and villages of this lost world!” – The Great Sending, page 86.

Prayer Prompts:

- † Satan uses many means in opposition to Christ’s sending. Think about how Satan discourages you. Pray for the strength to overcome these stumbling blocks.
- † Pray a prayer of thanks to God for sending you on His mission.
- † Ask Jesus to help you to pray for the people you encounter in your life today.
- † Why would you thank Jesus that He has sent you on His mission? Talk to Him about it.
- † What “town” or “village” or “group” or “family” has Jesus sent you to? Pray to see, go and listen to the people to whom Jesus has sent you.
- † Read Luke 10:2. There is an urgency to harvest a field when the crop has ripened. Reflect on what this verse means in today’s world and in the life of the Church. Pray that God would open your eyes and heart to see the harvest.

Study 11 - Come to the Wedding

But they all alike began to make excuses. – Luke 14:18

“This mission has eternal consequences.” – The Great Sending, page 89.

Prayer Prompts:

- ‡ Think of someone for whom you have prayed but who has made excuses for not hearing a Christian witness. Pray specifically for this person throughout the day.
- ‡ Ask God to forgive your excuses to give a Christian witness when the opportunity arises.
- ‡ Reflect on the Good Shepherd’s voice to follow him. How do you hear it? Sit in prayerful quietness listening for the Lord’s voice.
- ‡ Offer a prayer of thanks to God because He wants and invites all people to participate in His eternal wedding feast in Heaven.
- ‡ Ask the Lord to continually remind you and all of His church that the result of your being sent will have eternal consequences.
- ‡ Jesus wants every seat at his Banquet Hall filled. Pray that today your life and actions invite people to “come and see”.

Appendix

On the following pages, you’ll find resources for the prayer practices suggested in the studies, as well as words to the hymns offered as prayer prompts.

them today.

- Use the church directory to pray for each family over the next several weeks. Call them on the phone. Use your conversation to indicate your genuine interest in them. Example: “I’ve just been thinking about you and wondering how you are doing.” Ask about some situation you know about in their lives, for example, children, parents, job, etc.
- What would it look like if your congregation “welcomed sinners and ate with them” (The Great Sending, page 115)? Brainstorm some ideas with a prayer partner.
- Reflect on the ways God has gifted you. Think of and seek out places in your congregation and community where you can use these gifts to serve others.
- Use the practice of Examen to reflect on how the Holy Spirit is working in your life. (see resource in Appendix)
- Research the work of a larger church social ministry organization such as one of those listed in the prayer prompts for Study 30. Consider your personal finances. Could you send financial support? Or, could you volunteer for one of their projects?
- Create a prayer list of family members. Commit to pray for them daily.

Study 12 - The Laborers in the Vineyard

He said to them, “You go into the vineyard too.” – Matthew 20:7

“The reward for every missionary in the Church of Jesus Christ is to participate in the greatest rescue effort in the face of human history, the rescue from sin, death, and hell. There is a lot of rescue necessary before the midnight hour.” – The Great Sending, page 92.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✝ We do not always think of ourselves as missionaries, but we are! Pray that the Spirit may give you the mindset of a missionary to seek the lost.
- ✝ Reflect on the generous love of God in your life. Pray for a specific person in need of knowing God’s great love.
- ✝ Confess the times when we are in danger of “rightful compensation” thinking. Ask for God’s forgiveness.
- ✝ At what age did you realize that you were called to serve in God’s vineyard? Talk to Jesus about it. Thank God that there are others who serve in His vineyard, the world.
- ✝ Pray to the Lord to send more workers into His harvest.
- ✝ Who are people who have invited you to work/serve in God’s vineyard? Thank Him for them.

Study 13 - God's Commission: Prophesied

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" – Mark 1:2-3

"Our commissioning Lord, . . . we can always rely on the power of Your Holy Spirit to assist us in our witness, as John did for Jesus." – The Great Sending, page 97.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Our Christian witness does not always bring about immediate results. Pray that today your words and actions reflect your faith.
- ✠ Pray that the Spirit speaks through you bringing God's comfort, care, and Good News hope to someone.
- ✠ Give thanks to God for being a "sent one" as you reflect in what that means to you.
- ✠ Think of believers in your family. Thank God for sending people to bring the Gospel of Jesus to them and to encourage them in faith.
- ✠ Spend some time thinking about your Baptism and all that it means to you. Remember that you are a child of God by making the sign of the cross. Thank God for His love for you and for all people.
- ✠ Through your Baptism you were commissioned a missionary. Pray that the Holy Spirit gives you words of witness to share with others today.

- Call the person who was the 'light' of Jesus for you, or if that person is no longer living on earth, contact his/her relative and tell them what that person meant to you and give examples of how they were the light.
- Start a daily baptismal remembrance. Commit to beginning and ending each day by making the sign of the cross, and saying, "I am a child of God."
- What place, setting, experience in your life is Jesus sending you to? Go there and notice the people and situations in their lives. Think about them. Pray for them.
- Find a prayer partner (or two or three) to be encouragers for each other.
- Write a thank you note to someone who has invited you to serve in some kingdom ministry.
- Sometime this week, make the intentional effort to talk to and LISTEN to someone you might otherwise ignore. It may begin with your compliment to a neighbor about his/her lawn looking nice. Listen to how they respond, comment on what they say, and listen. God is using you to encourage that person.
- Find information about a global missionary family (<https://www.lcms.org/worship/bulletin-inserts/missionary-prayer-cards>). Research and learn as much as you can about them. Pray for them specifically.
- Ask another congregation member what it means to be sent and how they carry out their sending.
- Create a prayer calendar for your community (see www.lcms.org/worship/pray-for-us-calendar as an example).
- Contact someone whom you have not seen in church for a while. Call, write them a card, email them a note to let them know you are thinking of them and have prayed for

- Prayer walk the neighborhood. Make a note of the neighbors whose names you do not yet know. Make an effort to learn their names.
- Make a list of actions you or your congregation could do to shake things up in terms of mission outreach. (be creative! be bold! be outrageous!) How could these activities have a more eternal consequence? What would need to change? Who could do this? When?
- Talk to a fellow believer this week, ask them what it means to them that Jesus sent us believers into the world as He was sent. You can begin something like this: “We’ve been talking in church about how Jesus sent us believers into the world as He was sent into the world. It really makes me think. What does it mean to you that Jesus sent us believers into the world as He was sent?”
- If someone enters your home, can they tell it is a Christian home? Create a list of specific ways your home, yard, garden, etc. can be a Christian witness. Act on at least one item on your list.
- During this week observe people who are wearing a cross. Count how many. Take a chance and speak to one of them. Say something like: “That is beautiful (unique...) cross you are wearing. I was wondering what that cross means to you.” Then you may have an opportunity to share what the cross means to you.
- During a conversation this week with a friend, neighbor, family member, co-worker, you can say, “Our church is talking about Jesus and how they say that Jesus is the Son of God. What do you think it means to say that Jesus is the Son of God? The idea is for you simply to listen. Do not confront or correct, or argue, just listen. If they ask you what you think, share what you believe without disrespecting in any way what they have said.

Study 14 - The Great Sending

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. – Matthew 28:19-20

St. Augustine prayed: “give what you command, Oh Lord, and then Command what you will.” – The Great Sending, page 99.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✝ Pray today that the hearts of those who oppose Christian faith may be open to hear the Gospel.
- ✝ Ask God to help you see how you have received all that you need to be an effective witness. Thank God for these gifts.
- ✝ Ask the Spirit to provide opportunities and guide your words of witness today.
- ✝ Thank God for the original apostles and for missionaries like Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy. As you pray, reflect on what Jesus did through them and how that affects you.
- ✝ Reflect on the people to whom you think God is sending you. What seems impossible to you about it? Talk to Jesus about this.
- ✝ Give thanks for the faith and witness of Mary Magdalene. Bring to mind the women of faith who have witnessed to you. Thank God for women of faith and their ministry as everyday missionaries.

Study 15 - The Great Christ Sending

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. – John 17:20

“Prayer drives the mission.” – The Great Sending, page 103.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Use the verses of the hymn, “What a Friend we have in Jesus” to guide your prayer time. (words in the Appendix)
- ✚ Pray for the institutional church, for unity and protection from looking “too much like the world to make a difference.” (The Great Sending, page 103).
- ✚ Pray that you would love the world as God loves it. Reflect on what this means. What would it look like?
- ✚ Give thanks to Jesus for including you and your congregation when he prayed before suffering and dying on the cross. Ask Jesus for each congregation to earnestly pray for unity within the congregation and within our church body.
- ✚ Pray for people in your congregation to be unified in awareness that each one is sent into the world for Jesus.
- ✚ Pray for people in your congregation to encourage one another not to escape from the world into the church. Pray for them to be convinced that God has sent them into the world so that the Holy Spirit can make His Gospel impact on people through us.

Activity Ideas

On the following pages, you will find some suggestions to move prayer into action. You can do these yourself or perhaps form a small group and share your experiences of engaging in the activities for a particular week with each other.

Study 42 - A Panoramic View of God's Love for the World

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands... - Revelation 7:9

“The panoramic view is clear: the *Missio Dei* involves every believer and assembly of believers in the great sending task of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.” – The Great Sending, page 205.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect for a time on what the multitudes in heaven will look like. Pray in thanks that God's love is for everyone.
- ✚ Consider your own “world” – those who live in your neighborhood, work environment, and sphere of influence. Pray for greater diversity, that your “world” reflects God's vision.
- ✚ Thank God for the privilege to be His witness. Pray for the courage and wisdom to do so.
- ✚ Read Revelation 7:16-17. Pray for God's worldview, that you may serve the Mission of Christ for saving all people and promising the glory of heaven.
- ✚ Give thanks for your ministry calling and the hope of renewed engagement in sharing the eternal Gospel of Christ, by reaching across national, ethnic, race, language, class, and gender barriers for His glory.
- ✚ Pray for the Church that she may continue to share the eternal Gospel and participate in God's mission to proclaim Jesus Christ to all parts of the world.

Study 16 - Fields Ripe for Harvest

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” – Matthew 9:38

“The *Missio Dei* is to love and care for those who are hurting, helpless, and lost.” “Through our baptism we are called to participate in the harvest by loving people and pointing them to Christ.” – The Great Sending, page 105-106, 107.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ We do not always sense the urgency to be laborers in the harvest. Pray that you may truly see the hurting, helpless, and lost ones who need to know the love of Jesus.
- ✚ Pray for the Spirit's presence today that you have the wisdom and courage to share Jesus with someone.
- ✚ Thank God for your baptism and gift of faith. Thank God for the people who shared the love of Jesus with you.
- ✚ Use the prayer at the end of Study 16 in The Great Sending to guide your prayer time.
- ✚ Think of specific people you know or have heard about in your community and area. Think of those who are hurting or who are harassed and helpless. Think of those specifically who are ready for some good news and hope in their lives. Pray for the Lord of the Harvest to send workers to them to bring the Good News and hope to them.
- ✚ Thank God that you know that He is sending you into the harvest. Ask Him to show you who He is sending you to and to enable you to listen and to share the Good News.

Study 17 - Finding the Lost One

So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. – Matthew 18:14

“Christ not only brings us together in Holy Baptism, but he implores us to search for the one who is lost.” – The Great Sending, page 109.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Every congregation has members who quietly slip out the “back door” of the church and become inactive. Think of someone you know like this and pray for them. You might use your church directory to help remember people no longer active in congregational life.
- ✚ Pray: We pray that you open the eyes of your people wandering in the danger zone of the world and find a gracious path back to you.
- ✚ Pray: We pray that your heartbeat for the lost will beat through our hearts and compel us to respond in love and passion.
- ✚ Pray: We thank you that you are the one to search for your sheep and use us mercifully to be part of your mission.
- ✚ Pray: Heavenly Father, our focuses are distracted from your love, please turn the desire of our heart to the souls who were once in the kingdom but have wandered away.
- ✚ Pray: Father God, give us the courage to share your love to our family members, friends and neighbors. Let your saving Word speak to their heart. Please guide them to your Truth and protect them from carelessness and the foolishness of this world.

Study 41 - The Honor is to You Who Believe

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 2:4-5

“Shame and honor easily relate to the forgiveness of sin, which indeed is the heart of biblical faith.” – The Great Sending, page 201.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray that God would provide you with opportunities to listen and learn more about His children who are not like you. Turn your prayer into action.
- ✚ Ask for God’s forgiveness for the times we view potential witnessing only from our own world view.
- ✚ Pray that your heart and attitude may welcome all of God’s beloved children as your sisters and brothers in Christ.
- ✚ Read Ezekiel 36:26. Ask God for the grace to see Christ in the pain of those who have been rejected and shamed, and invite them to a place of honor among His believers.
- ✚ Ask the Holy Spirit for a Christ-like heart that welcomes people from other cultures, races, and world views, so that through you they may see Jesus, in whom there is no shame.
- ✚ What are the places of guilt and shame in your life? Reflect on how the light of God’s forgiveness can bring healing and hope. Thank God for what you’ve discovered.

Study 40 - The Fear of God

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. – 1 Peter 1:17-19

“The ancient term, *Missio Dei*, is most specific: Jesus turns us out of ourselves to God our Father.” – The Great Sending, page 198.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Ask God to forgive your "turning in on yourself" and failure to love God first. How might you begin to put God ahead of other things in your life?
- ✚ Pray for churches to be outward focused in their ministry.
- ✚ Ponder the phrase, "fear of God". How do these words make you feel? How might you ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to the awe of God that comes from this fear?
- ✚ Pray for wisdom to see where your thoughts and actions might be serving yourself instead of serving others.
- ✚ Think of some ways your congregation can turn its focus outward to the community instead of simply serving its own members. Pray for guidance in how to suggest changes to your church's activities.
- ✚ Pray for those who are afraid of God's wrath. Ask the Holy Spirit to be a Comforter, a bringer of the good news of forgiveness and salvation.

Study 18 - The Seeking God

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. – Luke 19:10

“Our missionary motivation – as St. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ compels us” – springs only from a deep and abiding understanding of our God's unconditional love for us and for all people.” – The Great Sending, pages 114-115.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray every day this week for a person you know who has drifted away from God and His church.
- ✚ Pray for the Whole People of God to have the heart and love of God and to miss and grieve over those who are lost.
- ✚ Pray: Forgive us, O Lord, as we ourselves are lost because we are not able to see the depth of your love and mercy to us. Grant us forgiveness because we are not passionately and diligently looking for the spiritually wandering people in our family, neighborhood and community.
- ✚ Pray: Thank you for watching over us with mercy and loving us back into your blessed family; for realigning our purpose with your mission in the world.
- ✚ Pray: Loving Father, forgive us for not understanding the depth of your love. Please, forgive us for not going after family members, friends and neighbors who run away from you.
- ✚ Pray: Father, give us the grace and the loving heart to share the message of love to our family members, friends and neighbors. Father, help us also to rejoice with the heavens as the lost come to you.

Study 19 - Christ Completes All

(Jesus) said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem." – Luke 24:46-47

"It's essential to God that every sinner hears this Good News personally and in hearing it, believes and, in believing it, is saved." The Great Sending, page 120.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Reflect on the knowledge that the Lord precedes you in the world to which you are called to proclaim the Gospel. Pray in thanksgiving for this and for the boldness to trust this promise.
- ✠ You were chosen through baptism to be Christ's personal voice to friends, relatives and neighbors. Pray that your words and actions today are a winsome witness.
- ✠ Pray the words of this week's verse using the *lectio divina* pattern (see Appendix) for your prayer.
- ✠ Ask for Jesus to give you a heart for all people and opportunities to share the love of Jesus with others in your life.
- ✠ "God reconciled the world to Himself, not counting (our) trespasses against (us)" Pray that God uses you to be an active participant in His reconciling mission to the world (community) around you.
- ✠ Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you power to proclaim the Good News of Jesus boldly.

*see Appendix for an additional commentary on this study

Study 39 - Not Yet Seeing, But Believing and Rejoicing

"Set your hope on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." – 1 Peter 1:13

"Christian' America is gone, and it's not about to come back. We can grieve what's been lost, or we can see as never before that faith is all about Jesus Christ." – The Great Sending, page 194.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Thank God for sending His Son Jesus to be our Savior.
- ✠ Pray for the Church that it might see new opportunities to be an effective witness to the world.
- ✠ Pray that the Spirit would open your eyes to the opportunities you have to be a Christian witness.
- ✠ Pray for those who have fallen away from their faith in Christ.
- ✠ Give thanks that you are saved through Jesus' sacrificial life and death. With whom can you share this good news?
- ✠ Ask God for wisdom and discernment in how you can live out the *Missio Dei* in your everyday life.

Study 38 - A Kingdom of Priests Who Witness

"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord... - Isaiah 43:10a

"By listening to and cultivating a relationship with another person, we can shape our testimony to relate with her or him, in ways that meaningfully connect us." – The Great Sending, page 192.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Pray that the Lord would open your heart to sense and be mindful of the needs of others.
- ✠ Pray that the Lord would fill your heart with His love, spilling over into your conversations with others today.
- ✠ Thank God for the opportunities to witness today.
- ✠ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, in what ways might I need to be more observant and attentive to the people in front of, and around me, where you are prompting me to see and hear through your eyes and ears?
- ✠ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, for what circumstance or for whom do I have compassion?
- ✠ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, the fruit (faith) that you give us through the Holy Spirit is shown through love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Please lead me to know where you are calling me to specifically witness your goodness through this fruit.

Study 20 - God's Mission and Ours

Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." – John 4:39

"God has promised a harvest that should encourage all Christians to see themselves as being sent to all peoples to proclaim eternal life through Jesus, the Messiah . . . Our mission is to share our faith in and experience with Jesus." – The Great Sending, page 123.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ The mission of God is initiated by God. Pray that you see God's work around you. Pray for opportunities to join God in His work.
- ✠ Give thanks to God for His unconditional love for all people.
- ✠ Pray for confidence in planting the seed of hope in Christ.
- ✠ Pray that the Lord will always remind you that you are in his missionary field wherever you go and that you are his personal representative in your part of the world.
- ✠ Ask God to show you who needs help or a kind word. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you courage and to show you what to say and do for the person.
- ✠ "He told me all that I ever did" Knowing your life, can you handle these words of Jesus as spoken to you? Can you hear Jesus' words of Absolution ("Father, forgive ...) spoken from the cross to your heart? As a forgiven sinner, pray for courage to share in this mission with others.

Study 21 - A Prophecy Fulfilled Through Ordinary People

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! – Luke 2:11 (NIV)

“God still uses common, ordinary people to accomplish the mission begun with the sending of Jesus. He uses you. He uses me. He sends you. He sends me. He blesses you. He blesses me.” – The Great Sending, page 126.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ What ordinary person shared their faith with you? Pray a prayer of thanks for that person.
- ✚ We are ordinary people, surrounded by ordinary people. Pray for an opportunity to share the love of Christ in an ordinary way today.
- ✚ Pray that the Lord will always remind you that you are in his missionary field wherever you go and that you are his personal representative in your part of the world.
- ✚ Reflect on the ways God has gifted you. Pray for the wisdom to use these gifts in the Kingdom.
- ✚ Read Luke 2:11 Give thanks that all the days of the year that lie ahead are to be met knowing that you have a Deliverer, a Rescuer, Christ the Lord. Pray that like the Shepherds, you can be a Good News teller too.
- ✚ Read Luke 2: 29-30 Ask the Lord to give you eyes like those of old Simeon, seeing Jesus in the scriptures, at worship, during devotions and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Ask your Heavenly Father to help you to know Jesus better, living by faith and trusting the promise of His Word.

Study 37 - A Kingdom of Priests Who Pray

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” – John 16:23

“How wonderful that Jesus did not simply instruct us priests to pray for His mission, but that He assures that God will answer!” – The Great Sending, page 190.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Use your congregation’s weekly prayer list to pray for your church family.
- ✚ Pray for government and community leaders.
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, please bring to mind those in my close circle of family and friends for whom I am to pray.
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, please bring to mind people in our nation and around the world who are experiencing trouble and hardship for whom I am to pray (specifically those suffering tragedy, suffering with illness and disease, suffering with hardships of poverty and hunger).
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, please bring to mind the places in my personal sphere of influence for which you are calling me to intercede.
- ✚ Using the front page of your newspaper or the news headlines for this week, pray for people and situations that you notice.

Study 36 - A Kingdom of Priests Who Serve

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. – Romans 12:2

“By having our lives fashioned by God’s choosing us to be His priestly kingdom, His mediators, and using our God-given gifts, we will be better able to represent God to the world. Our transformed lives will lend credibility to our witness, and the invitation to our fellowship will be warmer and more welcoming.” – The Great Sending, page 186.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Pray for the other participants in this study – members of your congregation, prayer team, church staff and leaders. Encourage one another this week to be God’s kingdom of priests.
- ✠ Reflect on the challenges you are facing as you represent one of God’s royal priests. Pray for God’s guidance and help.
- ✠ Pray that you might serve your neighbors in some tangible way this week.
- ✠ Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what it means to be a living sacrifice and ask him to equip you to live daily as one who has been crucified with Christ. (Galatians 2:20)
- ✠ Thank the Lord for calling you into this position of royal priesthood, and for all the supports that he has already provided to help you carry out your role.
- ✠ Pray that you might be a better listener to your neighbor’s needs, praying for them, lifting their needs to God.

Study 22 - Rendezvous with Jesus

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matthew 28:20

“As any Christian knows, the process of discipleship is lifelong . . . Observance calls for ongoing interaction, for embodying the life of Christ on a daily basis over time.” – The Great Sending, page 130.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Pray that God would guide and guard your speaking to family, friends and neighbors.
- ✠ Pray for your family today, lifting each person by name. Thank God for them and ask God to bless them. Be as specific as possible.
- ✠ Pray that God would lift your spirit today, making your joy in Christ a tangible characteristic of your life.
- ✠ Read Matthew 28: 18-20. Tell the Heavenly Father that it is your desire to know him better, to know more about him and to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Pray for a teachable spirit so that you may grow in grace and knowledge.
- ✠ Thank the Father for Jesus and his reassuring presence and precious promise to be with you always. Ask to be given opportunities to witness for Him, teaching the truth of His Word to all with whom you come in contact with.
- ✠ Use The Word Doodle in the Appendix (or another resource) to memorize Matthew 28:20 and to guide your prayer.

Study 23 - Nourishing the Fishers of Men

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." – John 21:17

"Jesus has ended our guilt and shame with his own life and death. He gives us the beginning of each new day to feed others with his Word and tend them with his love." – The Great Sending, page 135.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✠ Reflect on what it means to be a forgiven child of God. Pray a prayer of thanks to God the Father for sending his Son, for Jesus' redemptive death and resurrection, and for the Spirit's presence in your life.
- ✠ Think of the people who are the lambs and sheep in your life. Pray for the wisdom to know how to tend and feed them.
- ✠ Give thanks for a new day to feed others with God's Word and tend them with his love.
- ✠ Pray that the Holy Spirit keep you hungry for the spiritual nourishment that only your Good Shepherd Christ Jesus can give, and that He lead you into and through the life-giving waters of the Holy Scriptures.
- ✠ Give the Lord Jesus thanks and praise for having put into your life under-shepherds who fed you with the life-giving and life-sustaining message of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.
- ✠ Think of specific names of some "lambs" in your life (such as children or adults new to the faith). Pray for these lambs by name.

- ✠ Thank the Lord for the little contribution you have made in bringing souls to him, and for what he is going to do through you as you commit, by HIS help, to being a part of the great sending.
- ✠ Choose one of the verses from the Book Of Acts used in this study. Spend some time with it (perhaps using *lectio divina*). Let this verse guide your prayer time.

Study 35 - Acts: The *Missio Dei* and the Beginning of the New Testament Church

And the Word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly... - Acts 6:7

And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. - Acts 9:31b

But the Word of God increased and multiplied. - Acts 12:24

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. - Acts 16:5

So the Word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. - Acts 19:20

...proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. - Acts 28:31

“The six summary passages in the Book of Acts are a record of how God’s Word was a multiplying, progressive, and influential power of God at work in the early church. And, it is a multiplying, progressive, and influential power of God at work today.” – The Great Sending, page 179.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect on a favorite Bible verse. Thank God for the edification of your faith through the Word.
- ✚ Think of someone with whom you have shared a Christian witness, ask God to help you continue to serve as God’s missionary.
- ✚ Pray that the Church might walk “in the fear of the Lord.”
- ✚ Pray for the Holy Spirit to increase a passion and hunger in you for the study of God’s Word, and to fill you with the same passion and hunger to share it with others.

Study 24 - Holy Spirit, Divine Helper

And I will ask the father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever. – John 14:16

“The words, the witness, the message, and its power are the Holy Spirit’s gift in you. – The Great Sending, page 138.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray broadly and then specifically for the world “burdened with over-information and misinformation” (The Great Sending, page 138).
- ✚ Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to and through you today.
- ✚ Think about your God-given gifts. Pray that you may use them in sharing Christ’s love today.
- ✚ Pray that you be directed to the Means of Grace (the Word of God preached and taught, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper), and that the Holy Spirit help you to understand and to apply those means so that you be constantly connected to your Savior and equipped to help your neighbor in Christ’s love.
- ✚ Give thanks to God for having sent His Holy Spirit as your Helper. Thank Him for the help, the wisdom, the illumination and the guidance the Spirit has given you so that you can be your neighbor’s helper.
- ✚ Thank God that “the words, the witness, the message, and its power are the Holy Spirit’s gift to you. (The Great Sending, page 138). Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit into the world and into you.

Study 25 - The Gospel Power

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. – Romans 1:16

“Like Paul, we baptized Christians are given the desire and dutiful joy of being helpers to share the hope in Christ dwelling within us.” – The Great Sending, page 143.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect on what it means to be a construction worker in building the Church. Pray that the Spirit uses your God-given gifts to build the Church.
- ✚ Pray that you show up at the construction site (your daily life situation or circumstances) ready to work for Christ.
- ✚ Reflect on the walls that artificially separate people from one another. Pray that these walls may be broken down so that all may hear the Gospel’s good news.
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, bring to mind a person whose faith encourages me in my walk with You today so I can thank You for them now.
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, is there a relationship or circumstance where I have been cautious or fearful of boldly sharing the Gospel?
- ✚ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, what is a truth from Your Word that I can carry with me now to help me courageously proclaim the Gospel in my words and actions today?

Study 34 - Of Councils, Conflict, Conventions, and the Mission of God

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus, just as they will. – Acts 15:11

“The cover story is about circumcision and obeying God. But the underlying battle is about the mission of God to all people and the behavior of God’s people that enables the full and free proclamation of God’s saving grace.” – The Great Sending, page 176.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Use the verses of the hymn, “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word” to guide your prayer time. (words in Appendix)
- ✚ Reflect on the fences you as an individual have used to keep people in the category of “other” instead of “sister” or “brother”. Confess these times and ask for forgiveness.
- ✚ Pray that the larger Church remain bound to Scripture alone in freely sharing the love of God to all people.
- ✚ Differences of opinion can sabotage relationships in families, communities and in congregations. Pray that the God of peace blesses you with wisdom and patience to focus on His will in every disagreement.
- ✚ Disagreement can be a helpful means of introducing fresh ideas and/or strategies for ministry. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless you with insight to turn disagreements into opportunities.
- ✚ Use The Word Doodle in the Appendix (or another resource) to memorize Acts 15:11 and use this verse to guide your prayers.

Study 33 - Owing the Name “Christian”

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. – Acts 13:38-39

“Owing the name Christian is not a birthright, but a commission to those of us scattered today.” – The Great Sending, page 173.

Prayer Prompts:

- ‡ Reflect on how “bring a Christian” means being part of a group in motion. Pray that your identity as a Christian is seen through your actions.
- ‡ Use the words of the hymn, “Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling” to guide your prayer time. (words in Appendix)
- ‡ Pray by name for the young people in Confirmation class, or in the New Member class. Ask God to move in their hearts to “be a Christian” not just “be Christian”.
- ‡ Meditate on the word “Christian”. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continuously impress and excite you with what it means to wear that name.
- ‡ The gift of faith in our Lord Jesus comes with a dynamic and life-fulfilling agenda. Pray that the Lord will make plain His unique and current agenda for your life.
- ‡ Think of individuals you know who are living lives of response to the Gospel message. Give thanks to God for them.

Study 26 - Proclaimers are Sent

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. – Romans 10:17

“This treasure is so beautiful that even the feet of those who bring it are beautiful.” – The Great Sending, page 148.

Prayer Prompts:

- ‡ Satan and the world make it easy for us to slip into a “works righteous” mindset. Yet God’s treasure is given freely by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Ask God to protect you from trying to make yourself right with him and instead, rely completely on His grace.
- ‡ Reflect on the many ways one might hear the Word of Christ. Pray for the urgency of Paul to share the Good News.
- ‡ Thank God for His treasure of making us right with Him through Jesus Christ.
- ‡ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, awaken me to where I have been “treasure hunting” and trying to win your favor through my actions.
- ‡ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, help me pause now to rest in the rescuing grace and forgiveness that is mine solely through the work of Jesus Christ.
- ‡ Use the following to begin your prayer time: Lord, where and to whom are You uniquely sending me today to preach the good news?

Study 27 - The Basis for our Boldness

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. – Philippians 1:21

“The reality of having the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) means that we are grafted into His body; we are one with Him . . . Our fellowship with one another in Christ strengthens our resolve to be bold.” – The Great Sending, page 152.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Spend your prayer time in extended praise and adoration that Jesus is Lord.
- ✚ Give thanks to God for your faith family and prayer partners.
- ✚ Thank God for His Word, the Scriptures, that we might read, study and tell others.
- ✚ Give thanks for the joy of dwelling in the presence of the Lord.
- ✚ Ask for humble obedience to serve with Jesus to the orphan, widow and stranger.
- ✚ Pray that you might be “on mission” today – bold, forthright and confident in your witness.

Study 32 - God’s Mission Without Walls

So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. – Acts 10:34-35

“Indeed, God shows no partiality. Consider what that means in your setting and calling in your community.” – The Great Sending, page 171.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Reflect on what it means to be used fully in God’s *Missio Dei*. Pray that God might use you today, giving you grace and courage to step beyond the walls which hold you back.
- ✚ Pray for church leaders (any and all) that the Church may be a winsome witness to the world.
- ✚ Pray for godly leaders – locally, nationally, globally.
- ✚ Trust in the Lord who began a good work in us that He will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. Pray for a faith that trusts and sees what the Lord is doing today.
- ✚ Pray for clean hearts and minds that they are renewed by the Holy Spirit as we study His Word.
- ✚ Use The Word Doodle in the Appendix (or another resource) to memorize Acts 10:34-35 and use these verses to guide your time of prayer.

Study 31 - God's Mission is to the Whole Human Family

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. – Acts 8:5 (NIV)

“The mission of God that has become our mission must now include all members of the human family.” – The Great Sending, page 167.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray that God would remove all barriers that our sinful nature sets up in our minds and hearts, so that God's gospel may have free course and be preached through all we say and do.
- ✚ Reflect on the “Samaria” identified in this week's Bible study. Pray for the Lord to open doors to the Gospel there.
- ✚ Pray for missionaries suffering from persecution. Ask God's hand of protection to be with them and that the Holy Spirit would strengthen their faith to persevere.
- ✚ Pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on your Bible Study. Ask the Holy Spirit to open the heart of each participant.
- ✚ Ask Jesus to come into your heart. Ask Him to stay with you today and forever.
- ✚ Thank God for the missionary example of Philip in God's Word. Pray that the Church might grow through the adversity and persecution of today's world.

Study 28 - The Great Expansion of the Faith

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service. – 1 Timothy 1:12

“May our response today try to parallel that of your saints of the ancient world, as we endeavor to spread the faith as they did, all with the help of your attending Holy Spirit.” – The Great Sending, page 157.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ In some parts of the world, Christianity is a fast-growing religion. Pray today that the Spirit of God move in your community that people will come to believe in Christ as their Savior.
- ✚ We have been commissioned for service, sent by God as missionaries. Pray that your witness be bold and confident.
- ✚ Give thanks for the early church and the writers of the New Testament allowing us to draw strength from hearing about Christ Jesus and the kingdom of God.
- ✚ Seek to become a teacher with the nations – Pray that you see all people as children of God in need of hearing the Good News.
- ✚ Suffering and sanctification are the seed of the church – Pray for Christians in places of persecution.
- ✚ Use The Word Doodle in the Appendix (or another resource) to memorize 1 Timothy 1:12 and use this verse to guide your prayer time.

Study 29 - God's Mission is our Mission

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." – Acts 1:8

"The mission of God that our Lord has assigned to us as his church is indeed time-sensitive. . . the work of carrying out the mission of God in our world is always urgent, requiring not simply churchgoers but 24/7 followers of Jesus." – The Great Sending, page 161.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray that our faith and witness reflect the urgency of God's mission in this world.
- ✚ What does a 24/7 Christian look like? Pray that your life conforms to this ideal.
- ✚ Pray that God's mission be a contagious time within the body of Christ.
- ✚ Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, mind, and heart to see, know, and do God's Mission.
- ✚ Ask God to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit.
- ✚ Read the Book of Acts and ask the Holy Spirit for revelation knowledge. Read it out loud as a prayer.

Study 30 - God's Mission Partnerships

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. – Acts 6:3

"While not explicitly stated, Luke shows us that the proclaimers of the Gospel [sic] God most desires are those who possess a servant's heart. Perhaps the greatest proclaimers of the gospel are those who know first-hand what it means to 'wait on tables'." – The Great Sending, page 164.

Prayer Prompts:

- ✚ Pray that the social ministry efforts of your congregation (food pantry, school supply collections, etc.) yield opportunities for proclamation of the Gospel.
- ✚ Reflect on what it means to have a "servant heart". Pray that your decisions, actions and speech reflect the servant heart of a missionary in God's service.
- ✚ Remember in prayer the larger church ministries such as Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Hour, Lutheran Mission Society, Lutheran social service organizations, etc.
- ✚ Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where and how you fit into God's Mission.
- ✚ Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a prayer partner and pray for God's Mission.
- ✚ Does your church have a prayer ministry where prayer warriors gather regularly to pray for God's Mission? Ask the Holy Spirit to raise one up.