**7 Pentecost 2025**

The first prayer I learned as a child was *Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen*. We think the earliest version of this popular prayer was written by [George Wheler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Wheler_(travel_writer)) in his 1698 book ‘The Protestant Monastery.’ A later version printed in [The New England Primer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_England_Primer) in 1750 is the one I learned. Apparently, it was passed down through my family tree for centuries. It’s a prayer that is supposed to give kids a sense of peace and confidence, but it always kind of creeped me out. The idea of dying in my sleep was not comforting.

The second prayer I learned and memorized as a grade-schooler was The Lord’s Prayer. That was probably the case for all of us, regardless of denomination. Roman Catholic kids also had to learn the Hail, Mary. At any rate, I fell in love with the Lord’s Prayer; although early on there were parts of it I didn’t understand. This is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. They had been watching him pray and wanted to pray like him. He had been waiting for them to ask, no doubt. There are two versions of the prayer, one in Luke and one in Matthew. Today we heard Luke’s version.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen does not appear in Luke but in Matthew. Scholars believe that this ending was added by the early church in its liturgy, and is perhaps based on [1 Chronicles 29:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+29%3A11&version=NRSV): “Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.  Our Episcopal Book of Common Prayer includes both, although we usually prayer Matthew’s version. The Roman Catholic Church separates this doxological ending from the rest of the prayer. Either way is fine, but I have to remind Nando, who goes to Catholic school, that when he comes to acolyte here he can say the end of the prayer with us.

So, Jesus taught a simple but powerful prayer that easily could be learned by children. The entire gospel this morning references children. Child-likeness is foundational to the life of Christian prayer. We’re invited to address our Father in heaven personally, and to simply ask for His Kingdom and His Will to be done in our lives. That’s what we ask for. That’s what we seek. That’s the heavenly door we knock on. And we trust that God knows our needs before we ask, and will provide what we need in His way and in His time. And He wants us to persevere in prayer; He never tires of our asking for His Kingdom.

Speaking of children, in a few minutes we will be baptizing Lucille Joan Robson into Christ’s one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and I’ll be asking big brother Henry to help. Lucy can’t speak for herself yet, so we, the Church, the Body of Christ, will be speaking for her and promising to pray for her and her family and to help her to grow in the grace and love of God as she gets older. This is a joy, but also a solemn responsibility. This occasion is a great blessing for us all, and a sign of hope for Trinity Church and the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

So, what’s in a name? A lot. The name Lucille is a French fem. proper name, from the Latin *Lucia.* Lucille means “light” or “illumination.” In the Swedish tradition, The Feast of St. Lucy is December 13th and includes a church service with the oldest girl in the parish dressing up and being decked with a wreath of candles on her head. Every year, the Old Swedes Church close to here celebrates the feast. And, on December 13th 1777, while the Continental Army was camped here in Gulph Mills for eight days, General Washington attended the St. Lucy service at Old Swedes. Pretty cool. So, again Lucy means “light.”

This Lucy’s middle name is Joan. Joan is a Middle English fem. proper name from Latin *Joanna* and *Joannes,* meaning “God is gracious.” The grace and mercy of our loving God goes to the heart of Creation and Redemption. As St. Paul says, we are saved by grace and not by the works of the law. Without God’s grace, we would all be lost. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound…as the old hymn goes. The forgiveness we receive by God’s grace is renewable every day. Always we begin again, as the Benedictines say. There is nothing too bad that we can do that isn’t subject to the grace of God. This is particularly good news for people in prison who give their lives to Christ. Always we begin again.

So this little lady, Lucille Joan, has a great name to grow into, yes? Like Jesus, she will be light in this often dark and scary world, empowered by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit to enlighten others in God’s mercy and love. And to include big brother, the name Henry derives from the German meaning “robust leader.” The name radiates warmth, reliability, and timeless appeal, carrying the energy of a leader and the wisdom of a scholar. Sound like great team to me! Through them, God’ Kingdom will come and God’s Will will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **May it be so.**