



# CROSS STREET JOURNAL

Quarterly Journal

“A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL”



October—December 2024

Volume 28 Issue 5

**Willingness — Surrender — Faith — Action**

**“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”  
Isiah 43:19 (NIV)**

**“Level-Up”  
2024 — 2025**

**Transitioning to God’s Next**

**Honoring Our Past — Celebrating Our Present — Investing in Our Future!!**

**What does the Bible say about forgiveness?  
What does it mean to forgive?**

The Bible never gives a “dictionary” definition of forgiveness, but it shows us many examples of it. The greatest of all examples is the forgiveness of God. Although the following passage does not use the word *forgive*, it describes the concept of God’s forgiveness perfectly:

Psalm 103:8-12: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

It is important to note that forgiveness operates in the realm of sin. In the majority of the passages in the Bible that contain the word *forgive* or *forgiveness*, sin is mentioned. The  
*(Forgiveness on page 12)*

**Reasons for Believing in the Christian God**

Life may appear so complicated sometimes that we make all efforts to make it better. Any which way we can. For me and my household, we believe in God to the extent that we truly don’t have to explain to anyone how we arrived at that decision. However, if for any reason, you are asked to explain how, why, when and what persuaded you to believe in God, what would you say?

Personally, I never thought about it. Until recently when I picked up a book written by Walter Marshall Horton, with a single word title, “GOD”. It is only 65 pages, written in 1937, and loaded with so much wisdom and inspiration. Over the years I’ve tried to simplify my personal life. And now, with the discovery of this book, and to make my life even more simple, I believe this is the book I want near my bedside, at my most desperate and most vulnerable moments in my life.

In the front of this booklet, the rationale for publishing it is  
*(Christian God on page 15)*



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# Memo from GOD ....

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

## 1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

## 2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

## 3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster?

For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

## 4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

## 5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

## 6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

## 7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

## 8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

## 9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

## 10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. Heartache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. See you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that!

Created by **I AM**, a God. It makes My wrong, **You**.

With all My heart I love **YOU** ...

**God**



**GOD CAN TURN AROUND  
ANY SITUATION.**



2024-2025

**Vision: “We are seeking to be a church that is striving daily to be a church that is spiritually well, numerically well, and financially well!”**

***Isiah 43:19 (NIV) “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”***

Life is full of transitions. Jesus is the key to leading us through every situation and circumstance in life.

Last year Cross Street celebrated 200 years of Christian Ministry and we are embarking on 201 years of Christian Ministry. God has truly been and is good to us.

As we move forward as a church/body of Christ it is important that we seek to grow to a new level spiritually.

We know that God is concerned about us. God wants and has the best for Us! God wants us to move forward individually and as a church body of believers. God is moving in our lives today and setting us up for God's Next in our future.

Everyday let us set a goal to strive to strengthen our relationship with God! Let's strive to have willing hearts that are willing and ready to transition to God's Next for us!!! We are going forward because our faith tells us that God is not finished yet!!! There are some places that God wants to take us and things that God wants to reveal and give us!!! God is calling us to surrender to where we are now and to embrace the great future that He has for us!!!

Together the church can Level Up and transition to God's Next individually and as a body of Christ!

It is in our Leveling Up and seeking to embrace God's Next we will experience our relationship with Christ get stronger, we will walk through the doors that God has for us in this next season of our lives, ministry, and personal walk with Christ.

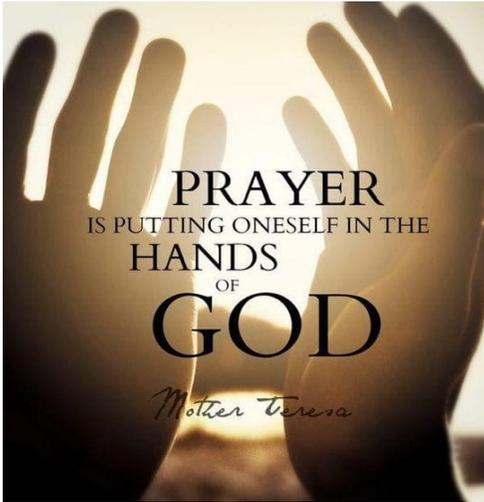
It is my prayer that we will Level Up in our church, bible study, and prayer meeting attendance. It is my prayer that we will seek to be a church individually and collectively be a church that is on a mission to Level Up! I believe that it is in our Leveling Up and Transitioning to God's Next as God reforms us to be the individual and Church that is Spiritually Well, will propel us into the church that draws others to Christ and will keep us Numerically and Financially Well.

**Cross Street let's Level Up and Transition to God's Next!!!**

Peace and Blessings

Pastor Robyn M. Anderson

## PRAYERS



### When You Need God's Forgiveness

**Key Scripture:** *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).*

**Key Thought:** God has forgiven you, is forgiving you, and will forgive you through your personal confession of sin.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I thank you for forgiving me of my sins. As you promised, when I sin I do have an advocate with you — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He paid the penalty for all my sins. <sup>1</sup> Thank you for granting repentance to my heart, Father. I specifically repent of my sin (s) of: \_\_\_\_\_. As I confess my sin to you, I turn my back on my sin and, with your help, I am determined to follow you and your ways at all times.

I realize, Lord, that it is by taking heed to your Word that I can keep myself from sin, and through your grace, this I will do. With my whole heart I will seek you; don't let me wander from your commandments. I have hidden your Word in my heart so that I might never again sin against you. <sup>2</sup>

Thank you, Father, that guilt no longer has any dominion in my life whatsoever. You have set me free from all guilt. Thank you for imparting your righteousness to me through Jesus Christ who knew no sin. It was He who became sin for me so that I might be made righteous in you. <sup>3</sup> Thank you, Father.

Unto you, O Lord, I lift up my soul, for I know you are good, and you are always ready to forgive. You are plenteous in mercy into all who call upon you. <sup>4</sup> I do so now, in the full assurance that your forgiveness is for me, thank you, Father.

Thank you for forgiving me of my iniquities and for remembering them no more. Lord, you have removed my sins from me as far as the east is from the west. <sup>5</sup> Help me to be like you, Father, in that I never want to remember my sins ever again. <sup>6</sup>

Now I know I am forgiven. I am restored. Thank you for the power of your forgiveness in my life, Father.

**References:** (1) 1 John 2:1-2; (2) Psalms 119:9-11; (3) 2 Corinthians 5:21; (4) Psalms 86:4-6; (5) Psalms 103:12; (6) Hebrews 8:12.

Bible Prayers for all your needs  
Victory House Publishers

## OUR SICK AND SHUT-IN NEED YOUR CALLS, YOUR CARDS AND YOUR VISITS... BUT ABOVE ALL, THEY NEED ALL OF OUR PRAYERS!

### Put It in God's Hands

**"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" Proverbs 3:5,**

Let us pray, "Father, thank You that You are our God and that You are ordering our steps. Thank You that we can be free from trying to figure everything out on our own. We declare that we are in the palms of Your hands, and we are going to trust You from the bottom of our heart, in Jesus' Name, Amen, Amen, Amen."

We all face things we don't understand, things that don't seem fair, but we have to know that God will not mismanage our life. He will not allow hardships and bad breaks that don't have any purpose. He doesn't just sit back and say, "I can't believe that just happened to you. Too bad." Nothing happens without His permission. Sure, there are things we don't understand, things that don't make sense. But if we stay in faith, don't get bitter we'll see it all come together. Today's Scripture says to simply trust God and don't try to figure out everything that happens along the way we'll get confused and discouraged. Put it in God's hands. "God, I believe that You have a purpose for this problem. When it all comes together, You will get the glory for it." Hallelujah and Amen.

### Beyond the Flaws

Matthew 4:19 says, **"Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Amen.**

Let us pray, "Father, thank You that You see world changers in rugged fishermen like Peter. Thank You that You're working in our life just as You did in Peter, and You will bring us to completion. We are looking beyond our flaws and failures to see the masterpiece in the making, in Jesus' Name, Amen, Amen."

We all know the story of Peter who was a fisher man. Peter was a poor, not a religious or man of faith and Jesus already knew that Peter would deny Him three times. God looks beyond his flaws. See the enemy would love for us to go through life feeling inferior, focused on our weaknesses, weighed down with regrets, guilty from past mistakes, condemned, ashamed. But Jesus calls us to leave our nets and follow Him. Don't let negativity limit your life. We are who God says we are. He says we're a masterpiece. He says we have greatness in us. He says we are destined to leave our mark. Rise up and follow and follow Him, Amen Hallelujah Thank You Jesus!

Barbara Perry

***Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. Psalm 99:9***



**The fruit of the Spirit** abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law."** (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

### THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;  
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;  
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; FAITHFULNESS, *half-heartedness*, **infidelity**;  
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**  
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

**READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR**

**OCTOBER**

1 Obadiah, Jonah  
 2 Micah 1-4  
 3 Micah 5-7  
 4 Nahum 1-3  
 5 Habakkuk 1-3  
 6 Zephaniah 1-3  
 7 Haggai 1-2

8 Zechariah 1-2  
 9 Zechariah 3-6  
 10 Zechariah 7-10  
 11 Zechariah 11-14  
 12 Malachi 1-4  
 13 Matthew 1-4  
 14 Matthew 5-7  
 15 Matthew 8-11

16 Matthew 12-15  
 17 Matthew 16-19  
 18 Matthew 20-22  
 19 Matthew 23-25  
 20 Matthew 26-28  
 21 Mark 1-3  
 22 Mark 4-6  
 23 Mark 7-10

24 Mark 11-13  
 25 Mark 14-16  
 26 Luke 1-3  
 27 Luke 4-6  
 28 Luke 7-9  
 29 Luke 10-13  
 30 Luke 14-17  
 31 Luke 18-21

**NOVEMBER**

1 Luke 22-24  
 2 John 1-3  
 3 John 4-6  
 4 John 7 10  
 5 John 11-13  
 6 John 14-17  
 7 John 18-21

8 Acts 1-2  
 9 Acts 3-5  
 10 Acts 6-9  
 11 Acts 10-12  
 12 Acts 13-14  
 13 Acts 15-16  
 14 Acts-17-18  
 15 Acts 19-21

16 Acts 22-24  
 17 Acts 25-26  
 18 Acts 27-28  
 19 Romans 1-4  
 20 Romans 5-8  
 21 Romans 9-11  
 22 Romans 12-16  
 23 1 Corinthians 1-4

24 1 Corinthians 5-8  
 25 1 Corinthians 9-12  
 26 1 Corinthians 13-16  
 27 2 Corinthians 1-3  
 28 2 Corinthians 4-6  
 29 2 Corinthians 7-9  
 30 2 Corinthians 10-13

**NOVEMBER**

1 Luke 22-24  
 2 John 1-3  
 3 John 4-6  
 4 John 7 10  
 5 John 11-13  
 6 John 14-17  
 7 John 18-21

8 Acts 1-2  
 9 Acts 3-5  
 10 Acts 6-9  
 11 Acts 10-12  
 12 Acts 13-14  
 13 Acts 15-16  
 14 Acts-17-18  
 15 Acts 19-21

16 Acts 22-24  
 17 Acts 25-26  
 18 Acts 27-28  
 19 Romans 1-4  
 20 Romans 5-8  
 21 Romans 9-11  
 22 Romans 12-16  
 23 1 Corinthians 1-4

24 1 Corinthians 5-8  
 25 1 Corinthians 9-12  
 26 1 Corinthians 13-16  
 27 2 Corinthians 1-3  
 28 2 Corinthians 4-6  
 29 2 Corinthians 7-9  
 30 2 Corinthians 10-13

**DECEMBER**

1 Galatians 1-3  
 2 Galatians 4-6  
 3 Ephesians 1-3  
 4 Ephesians 4-6  
 5 Philippians 1-4  
 6 Colossians 1-4  
 7 1 Thessalonians 1-5

8 2 Thessalonians 1-3  
 9 1 Timothy 1-3  
 10 1 Timothy 4-6  
 11 2 Timothy 1-4  
 12 Titus 1-3  
 13 Philemon  
 14 Hebrews 1-4  
 15 Hebrews 5-7

16 Hebrews 8-10  
 17 Hebrews 11-13  
 18 James 1-2  
 19 James 3-5  
 20 1 Peter 1-2  
 21 1 Peter 3-5  
 22 2 Peter 1-3  
 23 1 John 1-2

24 1 John 3-5  
 25 2 John, 3 John, Jude  
 26 Revelation 1-3  
 27 Revelation 4-8  
 28 Revelation 9-12  
 29 Revelation 13-15  
 30 Revelation 16-18  
 31 Revelation 19-22

Name of God	Meaning	Application
<b>JEHOVAH</b>	"I AM", The One Who Is The Self-existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. We need to obey Him.
<b>JEHOVAH- JIREH</b>	The Lord Will Provide	Just as God provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac, He provided His son Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice. God will meet all our needs.
<b>JEHOVAH-MEKADDISHKEM</b>	The Lord Who Sanctifies	God sets us apart as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, holy unto God, a people of His own. He cleanses our sin and helps us mature.
<b>JEHOVAH-NISSI</b>	The Lord is My Banner	God gives us victory against the flesh, the world and the devil. Our battles are His battles of light against darkness and good against evil.
<b>JEHOVAH -RAPHA</b>	The Lord Who Heals	God has provided the final cure for spiritual, physical, and emotional sickness in Jesus Christ. God can heal us.

There are various names of God, many of which enumerate the various qualities of a Supreme Being. The English word "god" (and its equivalent in other languages) is used by multiple religions as a noun or name to refer to different deities, or specifically to the Supreme Being, as denoted in English by the capitalized and uncapitalized terms "God" and "god". Ancient cognate equivalents for the biblical Hebrew Elohim, one of the most common names of God in the Bible, include proto-Semitic El, biblical Aramaic Elah, and Arabic 'ilah. The personal or proper name for God in many of these languages may either be distinguished from such attributes, or homonymic. For example, in Judaism the tetragrammaton is sometimes related to the ancient Hebrew ehieh ("I will be"). In the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 3:14), Yahweh, the personal name of God, is revealed directly to Moses. Correlation between various theories and interpretation of the name of "the one God", used to signify a monotheistic or ultimate Supreme Being from which all other divine attributes derive, has been a subject of ecumenical discourse between Eastern and Western scholars for over two centuries. In Christian theology the word is considered a personal and a proper name of God. On the other hand, the names of God in a different tradition are sometimes referred to by symbols. The question whether divine names used by different religions are equivalent has been raised and analyzed.

## Advent

**Advent** is the season of expectation, hope and celebration of the past, present, and future comings of Jesus Christ to the world. Much of the focus is on the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah to Israel and the expectancy of that fulfillment. The Advent cry is “Come,” even though Emmanuel has come. Jesus has come, presently comes into the hearts of believers through grace, and is yet to return. This season is a time of anticipation as the Church makes ready for the coming of the Lord and the celebration of Jesus coming as a babe in Bethlehem. Therefore, Advent embodies a vital element of the Christian faith. The Advent season has marked the beginning of the Christian Year since the eighth-century and consists of the four weeks before Christmas.

**Color:** Purple (violet or Lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus’ humanity, suffering, and fasting.

## Epiphany

**Epiphany** or The Season After Epiphany (4-9 Sundays) is a time for remembering the various times and ways Jesus was revealed to humans, particularly to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through the Magi (Wise Men) who represented other nationalities. It is a reminder of the universality of Jesus, the Savior of persons in every land. The first Sunday after Epiphany Day (January 6) is known as Baptism of the Lord referring to 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. This is an excellent time for baptism and renewal of the baptismal covenant. Appropriate symbols are water, the baptismal shell or font, a descending dove, and a cross standing in water. The emphasis for the remainder of the season is on the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, the miracles performed, and Jesus’ works and teachings.

**Color:** Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth.

## LITURGICAL COLORS

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word “leitourgia” that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

**Purple** (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus’ humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

**Green** is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and King-tide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

**White** is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

**Red** is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

**Black** represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

**Gold** is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

## Other Colors

**Blue** is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

**Kente Cloth** is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word “kenten” referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one’s heritage.

**Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart for God's Vision for the Church**

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)

2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast. "Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" ( Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)

3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant. Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)

4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)

5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

**Guidelines for Daniel Fast**

**Foods We May Eat**

After answering hundreds of questions about the Daniel Fast on the blog, I developed these food guidelines. My hope is that it will serve as a more complete list. The original list used by many people was issued in a book about fasting. I know the author tried to do the best he could, but that isn't the same as getting hundreds of questions seeking clarification.

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods. Look for the list of ingredients on the label (not the nutritional value) to make sure all the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

Foods to include in your eating plan during the Daniel Fast

**All fruits.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

**All vegetables.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are artichokes,

asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

**All whole grains,** including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

**All nuts and seeds,** including sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

**All legumes.** These can be canned or dried. Legumes include dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

**All quality oils** including olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

**Beverages:** spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

**Other:** tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

**Note: Unsweetened plant-based milks and juices can be used in recipes or on cereal, but the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water.**

**Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast**

**All meat,** animal, fish and seafood products including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and shellfish.

**All dairy products** including milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

**All sweeteners** including sugar, raw sugar, date sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, cane juice, date honey, and stevia.

**All leavened bread** including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

**All leavening agents** including yeast, baking soda and baking powder.

**All refined and processed foods products** including artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

**All deep-fried foods** including potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

**All solid fats** including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

**Beverages** including coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, **READ THE LABELS** so you are aware of the ingredients in the package.!

**Be blessed on your fast**

Learn more about the Daniel Fast at <http://Daniel-Fast.com>

**"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)**

## 10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: “your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God’s Kingdom is from “strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7), “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17), and from “glory to glory” (2Cor. 3:18).

3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.

4. During your period of fasting, feed on God’s Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.

5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.

6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.

8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.

9. Remember that hunger is purely a

matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.

10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

**Total Fast:** Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

**Partial fast:** Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

**1 Meal Fast:** Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

**Daniel Fast:** Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

# + PRAY

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

► **PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE:** Ask God to protect those most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

► **PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS:** Ask God to give our local, state, and national leaders wisdom in how to deal with the virus.

► **PRAY FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:** Ask that God would guide and protect them as they care for the sick.

► **PRAY FOR FAMILIES:** Ask God to comfort and provide for those whose businesses, job stability, and schooling have been affected.

► **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH:** Ask God to help His people have courage, find ways to serve those in need, and continue proclaiming the Gospel.



## A Poem of Praise

Father God, I love You so;  
You care for me even when I don't know.  
I often question Your intent,  
Despite those promises You've already kept.  
I try to make sense of all around,  
yet my eyes focus narrowly on my own.  
You forgive my impatience,  
and my self-righteous thoughts;  
And secured my salvation through Your Son's  
death on the cross.  
He redeemed all my sins and gave me new life;  
an act that cost a most precious price.  
With Your help, dear Lord,  
I will trust in the perfect plan  
that is a gift from Your great hand.  
Thank You for each day's new mercies,  
and the grace that wipes away all my inequities.  
To You, Adonai, is my praise for always;  
may my last breath be a whisper  
giving You all the glory.

*juliesanne.com*



## Sunday School is a Family Affair

We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103  
Virtual Classes (See page 29 for Details)  
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

**Come Grow with US!**

### Abram Builds an Altar at Mamre/Marking Transitions

Devotional Reading: **Philippians 4:10-19**

Background Scripture: **Genesis 12-13**

#### EXALT!

**Declaration:** Genesis 13:8-18

<sup>8</sup> Then Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. <sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” <sup>10</sup> And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. <sup>12</sup> Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

<sup>14</sup> The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and west, <sup>15</sup> for all the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

**Affirmation:** We desire the spiritual maturity that develops through acknowledging God’s activity in our lives.

#### ENGAGE

The lessons of this quarter are a study of worship practices offered as a grateful response to the covenantal relationship God initiates, first with Abraham, and later with the people of Israel. The patterns of worship reflect the gamut of community life, from praising God’s goodness and mercy to calling on God for help in times of crisis.

Unit 1, “Leaders Set Worship Example,” begins with the example of (Abram) Abraham, who built altars to mark those occasions on which God called him to greater faithfulness. Lesson 2 reveals Solomon’s worshipful awareness of people’s tendency to sin. Lesson 3 shows us Hezekiah’s prayerful realization of what’s most important: the Lord alone is God. Lesson 4 demonstrates the importance of spiritual leadership, as evidenced through Josiah’s call to bring back the people to the right worship as prescribed in the “book of the covenant.”

Throughout life, threshold opportunities arise that determine our future. How do we honor such opportunities with solemnity and gratefulness? Abram built altars to mark those occasions on which God called him to greater faithfulness.

Break into small groups and think about and discuss the following questions and issues: 1.) Share with one another how you may have experienced threshold moments or events either individually through some sort of encounter or as a part of a family occurrence. Describe what happened and the impact it had on you and others immediately and in later life. Were there both positive and adverse effects? Explain. 2.) Do interpersonal conflicts initiate a threshold events? If so, how might reconciliation take place with those in such conflict? How might the experience become a memorable one through the actions and responses of those involved? 3.) Can you recall a time when everyone in the family/community/church shared a commitment to the peaceful resolution of a dispute? If so, share some of the details and sense of relief. 4.) Can you share an occasion wherein a group memorializes the threshold events that resulted in resolution?

#### EDUCATE:

**Genesis 13:8-13:** Three times in Genesis, God’s statement of promise to Abraham follows a separation. In 12:1-9, Abraham, separated from his home (11:31; 12:1), traveled the land of Canaan, received it as a promise, and built an altar  
*(Hope on page 11)*

**Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God’s hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God’s children.**

*(Hope from page 10)*

in response to God's promise. Similarly, after Lot separated to Sodom (13:9, 11, 14), Abraham traveled the land of Canaan, received it a second time as a promise, and built an altar in response. Finally, in Genesis 22, Abraham showed his willingness to be separated from his son Isaac on an altar, then received the promise a third time. Living and roaming on the land was common in the ancient Near East. The provision for the health of Abram and Lot's herds determined their prospects for survival. Given the scarcity of grazing land and water sources, tempers were short. There were limits as to the size of herds that the land could support. In deferring to Lot, Abraham is on the verge of giving away the Promised Land. But Lot "chose" to go "east." Abraham remained in the land, securing God's promise. Lot became the father of the Ammonites and the Moabites (19:37-38), who proved to be obstacles to Israel's faithfulness (Deuteronomy 23:3-6; Ezra 9:1). Is there some symbolism relating to moving toward the east? The movement away from God in Genesis is toward the east (3:24; 4:16; possibly 11:2), perhaps a rhetorical device by the exilic editors of Genesis. Babylonian exile was also to the east. Note the subtle foreshadowing of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:22). Lot's choice of a land "toward Zoar," "toward the east" forebodes disaster. The ties between chapter 13 and the destruction of Sodom (Chapter 19) can be seen in verse 10b and verses 12b-13. Interestingly, the New Testament describes Lot as "a righteous man" (2 Peter 2:7-8).

**Genesis 13:14-18:** An altar is a structure on which offerings are made to a god. The Hebrew word for altar is *mizbeah* ("to slaughter"); Greek *thysiasion* ("a place of sacrifice"). Altars are places of exchange, communication, and influence (see Noah and Elijah). In the patriarchal period, altars were markers of place, commemorating an encounter with God (Genesis 12:7), or physical signs of habitation. The altar built by Abraham near Hebron was located relatively close to those mentioned in 12:6-8, in what would later be the central regions of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Mamre refers to an Amorite who resided near Hebron (Genesis 14:13, 24). He owned the place known as "the oaks of Mamre the Amorite" (14:13). Abraham lived in the town or district known as Mamre, which was part of Hebron (13:18; 18:1). The ESV Reformation Study Bible has interesting insight into the fulfillment of the Promised Land implicated in the verse 15: "The promises of the land were fulfilled several times but never consummated. God fulfilled the promise through Joshua (Joshua 21:43-45), but not completely (Joshua 13:1-7); even more so through David and Solomon (1 Kings 4:20-25; Nehemiah 9:8), but still not completely (Psalm 95:11; Hebrews 4:6-8; 11:39, 40). As Israel's Exodus from Egypt through the Passover (Exodus 12:1) is a type of the church's exodus from the condemned world through Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-4), so also old Israel's life in the land is a type of New Israel's life in Christ. Both are a gift (15:7, 18; Deuteronomy 1:8; Roman 6:23), and are received by faith (Numbers 14:26-44; Joshua 7 and John 3:16). Both uniquely possess the blessed presence, life, and rest of God (Exodus 23:20-31; Deuteronomy 11:12; 12:9,10; 28:1-14; John 1:51; 14:9; Matthew 11:28), and demand persevering faith (Deuteronomy 28:15-19; Hebrews 6). The land promises are consummated forever in the new heaven and new earth (Hebrews 11:39, 40; Revelation 21:1-22:6).

#### **ELEVATE:**

Respond appropriately to the following as requested: 1.) Explore the spiritual maturity of marking time and space as essential reminders of God-filled moments. Give some specific examples. 2.) Name a significant God-moment you have experienced and build an altar of remembrance and gratitude to God. Explain the significance to the group. 3.) Using watercolors or pastels, invite the learners to paint/draw how they feel led to greater faithfulness during the reading/Bible study. 4.) Explore the spiritual dimensions of conflict resolution. Give an example for the group to consider. 5.) Every morning, face the rising sun in the east, and thank God for the time and space you're been given. How does this make you feel?

#### **iThink:**

1. Explore the concept of liminality, or threshold events, and how God uses it to shape the lives of believers.
2. Share stories of property disputes that resulted in bringing families closer (or not). What was most helpful, or disruptive, to the families in setting the dispute?
3. Offer situations in which learners analyze conflicted situations and offer resolutions.
4. Review the covenant with Abraham and identify the threats to God's promises to Abraham.
5. Review the history of altars in the Middle East and their meanings for worship. See [Britannica.com/topic/altar](https://www.britannica.com/topic/altar).
6. Consider the meaning of altars in your church's faith tradition. When has the altar held importance in your memory of a particular event (baptism, marriage, conversion, etc.)?

**KEY VERSE: So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18**

*(Forgiveness from page 1)*  
following are typical examples:

Genesis 50:17: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly. Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.

Exodus 32:32: But now, please forgive their sin.

Leviticus 4:35: In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.

1 Samuel 25:28: Please forgive your servant's presumption.

Matthew 12:31: And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Luke 5:20: When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

For a person to find true forgiveness, he or she must admit the sin. This is called confession. If a person tries to pass off sin as a mere mistake, human failing, or temporary lapse of judgment; or if he or she simply denies the sin altogether, it is a barrier to forgiveness.

1 John 1:8-10: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

God forgives sin, yet this does not mean that He simply "looks the other way" or "sweeps it under the rug." The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23), and that penalty must be paid. In the Old Testament, God allowed for a sacrificial animal to take the place of the sinner. Leviticus 5:15-16 says, "When anyone is unfaithful to the Lord by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, they are to bring to the Lord as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. They must make restitution for what they have failed to do in regard to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a fifth of its value and give it all to the priest. The priest will make atonement for them with the ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven."

The writer of Hebrews observes, "The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). However, the blood of sacrificial animals did not actually pay for sin. It simply postponed the judgment until a better sacrifice could be offered to pay the full penalty of sin and make forgiveness possible. Hebrews 10 explains this in depth, but the following excerpts from that chapter outline the flow of the argument:

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:1-4)*

*Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:11-12)*

*"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more. " And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice*

*for sin is no longer necessary. (Hebrews 10:16-18)*

In order for God to forgive us, Jesus gave Himself as the sacrifice for sin. Jesus alluded to that sacrifice at the Last Supper when He told His disciples, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). After the resurrection, the apostles carried the message of forgiveness through Jesus Christ throughout the world, preaching to both Jews and Gentiles:

Acts 10:43: All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Acts 13:38: Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

Ephesians 1:7: In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

So God forgives people on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ. The only requirement is that sinful people confess their sin, turn from it, and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior. Once a person has experienced the forgiveness of God, he or she is then able (and responsible) to forgive others. "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13). In fact, those who refuse to forgive betray the fact that they do not understand how much of their own sin they need to have forgiven. Christians should be willing to forgive people who have sinned against them. Every person has wronged God far more than they have been wronged by other people. Jesus illustrates the point in Matthew 18:21-35:

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"*

*Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."*

*"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

*"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

*"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.*

*"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'*

*"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.*

*"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*

*"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."*

We often hear the phrase forgive and forget, and this can be misleading. As a rejoinder to this phrase, sometimes we hear, "I'll **(Forgiveness on page 13)**

(*Forgiveness* from page 12)

forgive, but I will never forget.” To forgive and forget does not mean that a person who has been wronged develops some kind of sanctified amnesia. A person who has been abused will never forget that it happened. A person who has suffered from an adulterous spouse will always remember that experience. A parent who has had a child abducted will probably think about that crime every day he or she spends on earth. Yet, it is possible for each of these people who have been sinned against to forgive and also to forget, as long as the biblical definition of *forget* is in view.

In the Bible, remembering and forgetting do not have to do with retention of information in the brain. In Genesis 8:1, after the flood, “God remembered Noah.” Does this imply that for a while God had forgotten about Noah, misplaced him among the flood waters, and then one day He remembered and thought He had better check on him? No, the biblical concept of remembering has to do with “choosing to act,” and *forgetting* means “refusing to act” on the basis of something. When the Bible says God “remembered” Noah, it means that God chose to act on Noah’s behalf and sent a wind to help the waters recede more rapidly. God promises that, under the New Covenant, “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:34; cf. Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). God does not forget that people have sinned, but, when He forgives, He chooses not to act on the basis of those sins. It is similar to the sentiment expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:5 where “love keeps no record of wrongs.” In the phrase *forgive and forget*, the two terms are really synonyms. Both mean that the person who has forgiven will not continue to hold that sin against the wrongdoer or take it into account in future interactions. A person may remember that it happened, but he or she can choose not to act on it—that is biblical forgetting.

Many wonder about forgiving people who have sinned but have not confessed, repented, or asked for forgiveness. Sometimes in court, the victims of a crime will get to speak to the perpetrator before the sentence is passed. Often the victims will tell how the crime has impacted them and ask the judge to impose the strictest sentence. But, on occasion, the victim will say to the perpetrator, “I forgive you.” Is this forgiveness valid if the convicted criminal has not confessed and asked for forgiveness?

The answer is both “yes” and “no.” On one hand, the victim often forgives the criminal so that he or she will not be eaten up by hatred for the criminal. The forgiveness granted by the victim in court does not absolve the criminal from any legal penalties, so the state is still right to prosecute. On the other hand, God forgives people when they confess their sin and ask for forgiveness; forgiveness only comes through faith in Christ, which involves a spiritual transformation. In the courtroom example, even if the victim “forgives” the criminal, there can never be the establishment or restoration of a relationship unless the criminal confesses his sin and actually seeks forgiveness.

The goal of biblical forgiveness is not only to benefit the

victim but to restore the sinner. This cannot happen without the acknowledgment of sin on the sinner’s part. Therefore, in some cases the one who has been sinned against is right not to “let it go” until the sinner has asked for forgiveness. Good parents should be willing to forgive once their wayward child has confessed and asked for forgiveness, but they are right to withhold forgiveness until their child has taken the steps necessary to allow the reconciliation. It would be foolish for a father to simply forgive his teenage son for disobeying his rules (and the law) by drinking and driving if the son does not acknowledge that what he did was wrong. However, the father should be willing to forgive when the conditions are right. In some situations, granting unrequested forgiveness cheapens the concept and ignores the seriousness of the offense.

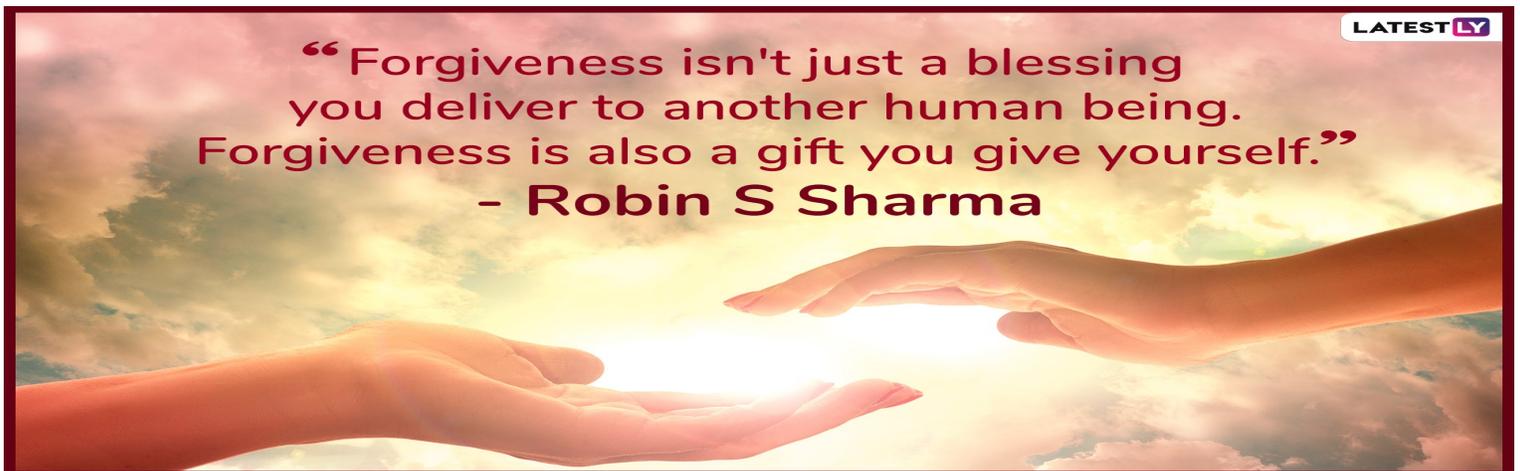
A person should always be willing to forgive every time forgiveness is requested, as Jesus taught. It goes without saying that on some of those occasions the request may be insincere, or, even if sincere, the person will commit the same offense against us again at a later time. After all, isn’t this what we do to God, and isn’t that how He forgives us?

In some cases the one who has been sinned against is right to simply “let it go,” even if forgiveness has not been requested, and in other cases the one sinned against needs to wait until the offending party has confessed and asked for forgiveness, so that the relationship can be restored. This is the principle behind church discipline, as outlined in Matthew 18:15–17. If the confrontation of the sinner brings about confession, then reconciliation and forgiveness are offered. If the confrontation is unsuccessful, excommunication from the church is the final result. As a general rule regarding petty slights and offenses in the family and in the church, a person should let them go—“turn the other cheek,” as Jesus put it (Matthew 5:39). However, if the offense is such that turning the cheek is not possible, the offended party is obligated to go talk to the offender about it. Under no circumstance does one have the right to harbor resentment, nurture bitterness, or gossip about the offense.

Here are some questions to ponder in relation to forgiveness:

- Have I confessed my sin and received God’s forgiveness?
- Is there anyone whom I have sinned against and from whom I need to ask forgiveness?
- Is there anyone who has sinned against me and has asked me for forgiveness, but I have refused to forgive?
- Is there anyone I am holding a grudge against for past wrongs?
- If there is an unresolved issue, will I simply “let it go,” or will I go talk to the offender about it? (Continuing to hold a grudge is not a biblical option!)
- Would I be willing to forgive if the offender asked me for forgiveness?

[www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)



## What is salvation? What is the Christian doctrine of salvation?

Salvation is deliverance from danger or suffering. To save is to deliver or protect. The word carries the idea of victory, health, or preservation. Sometimes, the Bible uses the words *saved* or *salvation* to refer to temporal, physical deliverance, such as Paul's deliverance from prison (Philippians 1:19).

More often, the word *salvation* concerns an eternal, spiritual deliverance. When Paul told the Philippian jailer what he must do to be saved, he was referring to the jailer's eternal destiny (Acts 16:30-31). Jesus equated being saved with entering the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24-25).

What are we saved *from*? In the Christian doctrine of salvation, we are saved from "wrath," that is, from God's judgment of sin (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). Our sin has separated us from God, and the consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Biblical salvation refers to our deliverance from the consequence of sin and therefore involves the removal of sin. We are saved from both the power and penalty of sin.

Who does the saving? Only God can remove sin and deliver us from sin's penalty (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5).

How does God save? In the Christian doctrine of salvation, God has rescued us through Jesus Christ (John 3:17). Specifically, it was Jesus' death on the cross and subsequent resurrection that achieved our salvation (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 1:7). Scripture is clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God (Ephesians 2:5, 8) and is only available through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

How do we receive salvation? We are saved by *faith*. First, we must *hear* the gospel—the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection (Ephesians 1:13). Then, we must *believe*—fully trust the Lord Jesus (Romans 1:16). This involves repentance, a changing of mind about sin and Christ (Acts 3:19), and calling on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

A definition of the Christian doctrine of salvation would be "the deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin that is granted to those who accept by faith God's conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus." Salvation is available in Jesus alone (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) and is dependent on God alone for provision and assurance.

## What is the plan of salvation?

Salvation is deliverance. All the world religions teach that we need to be delivered, but each has a different understanding of what we need to be delivered from, why we need to be delivered, and how that deliverance can be received or achieved. The Bible makes it abundantly clear, however, that there is only one plan of salvation.

The most important thing to understand about the plan of salvation is that it is God's plan, not humanity's plan. Humanity's plan of salvation would be observing religious rituals or obeying certain commands or achieving certain levels of spiritual enlightenment. But none of these things are part of God's plan of salvation.

## God's plan of salvation – The Why

In God's plan of salvation, first we must understand why we need to be saved. Simply put, we need to be saved because we have sinned. The Bible declares that everyone has sinned (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). Sin is rebellion against God. We all choose to actively do things that are wrong. Sin harms others, damages us, and, most importantly, dishonors God. The Bible also teaches that, because God is holy and just, He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23) and eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:11-15). Without God's plan of salvation, eternal death is the destiny of every human being.

## God's plan of salvation – The What

In God's plan of salvation, God Himself is the only one who can provide for our salvation. We are utterly unable to save ourselves because of our sin and its consequences. God became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 14). Jesus lived a sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5) and offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice on our behalf (1 Corinthians 15:3; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:10). Since Jesus is God, His death was of infinite and eternal value. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross fully paid for the sins of the entire world (1 John 2:2). His resurrection from the dead demonstrated that His sacrifice was indeed sufficient and that salvation is now available.

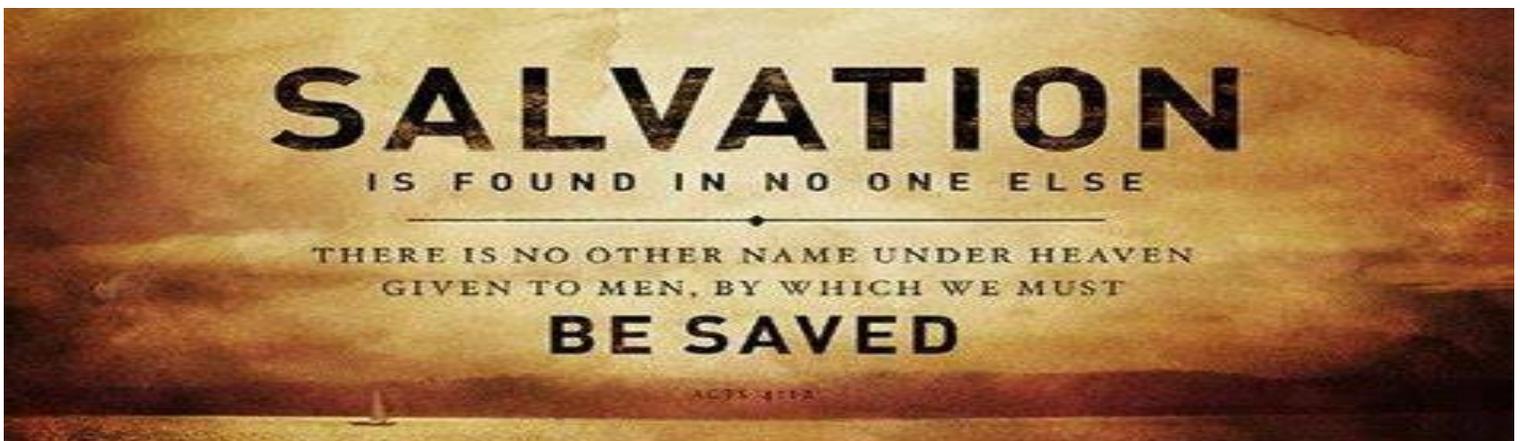
## God's plan of salvation – The How

In Acts 16:31, a man asked the apostle Paul how to be saved. Paul's response was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." The way to follow God's plan of salvation is to believe. That is the only requirement (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). God has provided for our salvation through Jesus Christ. All we must do is receive it, by faith, fully trusting in Jesus alone as Savior (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). That is God's plan of salvation.

## God's plan of salvation – Will you receive it?

If you are ready to follow God's plan of salvation, place your faith in Jesus as your Savior. Change your mind from embracing sin and rejecting God to rejecting sin and embracing God through Jesus Christ. Fully trust in the sacrifice of Jesus as the perfect and complete payment for your sins. If you do this, God's Word promises that you will be saved, your sins will be forgiven, and you will spend eternity in heaven. There is no more important decision. Place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior today!

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*(Christian God from page 1)*

clearly stated. It states that it is part of a series of twelve volumes with the purpose "to present simply, compactly and inexpensively a number of the best available interpretations of the Christian philosophy as a guide to Christian living". "God" is the third in the volume. And Walter M. Horton, I think, did a great job with laying out the Christian idea of God and explaining and expanding on any of the numerous attempts to guide anyone in to holding on to his or her beliefs in the Christian God.

The gem of this book, at least from my point of view, is where he explores all the various Reasons for Believing in the Christian God. Rather than paraphrasing this work, I might as well relay exactly what Walter Horton says.

"No one believes in the Christian God, or any rival conception of God, out of purely rational motives. Logical reasoning may help to deliver us from inconsistencies, errors, and subjective fantasies; but it is the whole "logic of life," and no merely intellectual process, that drives some of our contemporaries to cast in their lot with the "anti-God" movement, others to find rest in Nature as their mother and healer, and still others to hold their loyalty to the Christian God in the face of bitter nationalistic persecution. It is because men find strength, security, joy, hope, and lasting satisfaction in their religious (or anti-religious) belief that they continue to hold it. Sound reasoning may help confirm such belief, it is not sufficient to establish it.

The appreciation of this fact should deliver us from any ambition to capture men's allegiance for the Christian God, willy-nilly, by sheer logical cogency. Unless they are drawn to him by the inherent attractiveness of his nature and convinced of his reality by something stronger than argument, the more skillfully we fling the net of our logic over their heads and the more tightly we constrain them in the well-woven strands of our reasoning, the more they will struggle to escape. In religious argument, the attitude of aggressive onslaught is as inappropriate as the attitude of timid defensiveness.

If our God cannot defend himself, we cannot defend him; if he is not strong enough to find his own way to human hearts by the logic of life, we cannot make a way to him by verbal stratagems. The only appropriate attitude in religious argument is that of candidly recognizing the magnitude and difficulty of the religious quest in which we all participate as human beings, and gratefully sharing with fellow-wayfarers whatever truth has come to light us on our way."

After giving out some wonderful reasons why the Christian God is the one to believe in, Walter Horton concludes this brilliant book with further analysis of how to live in accordance with God's will.

Here again, I will recall what he says here, rather than attempt to paraphrase.

"The reader of this book will by this time be prepared for an important principle that has been hinted at more than once: God, in the Christian meaning of the word, is not to be found by the intellect alone; and when found, is soon lost again unless he becomes master of every side of our nature. The solution of the problem of God is not yet reached when intellectual difficulties have been cleared away, and something clicks in the brain, as at the solution of a proposition in geometry. God intellectually accepted is like a life-partner coolly and calculatingly selected on points, from a list of suitable prospects, but still unmet, unwooed, and unwon. There is a knowledge of God available only to those who take a further and more decisive step, which brings them into vital accord with his will and power – an accord which is often compared to that which exists between a responsive, obedient child and the parent whom he loves and trusts.

All ideas have a tendency to come into gradual command of our emotions and our actions, if accepted as true and hospitably entertained over a sufficient length of time; yet some ideas encounter terrific resistance from our whole established systems of habits, because they require so much of us, and imply so many radical changes that we are not ready to make. The idea of God is one of these ideas. It is easy to accept the idea that Paris is the capital of France, because we do not have to alter our lives very much in order to admit this truth. But to accept the idea that God is like Christ is hard, because it may require us to take up our cross and follow him toward Calvary; and all our pleasantest habits and dearest associated, when they sense that we are being drawn in that direction, combine to make us feel like fools and fanatics.

Although the act of 'self-surrender' to God is such a private, individual act, which every one must perform for him or herself, and although the inhibitions and difficulties that bar the way to it are peculiar to each individual, there are some suggestions that may prove helpful to those who stand – as many do actually stand in early life – at a point where they can dimly see what God is best to serve, but have not yet established vital contact with that sustaining and directing power called "the Will of God". No one suggestion is equally applicable for all. The best rule is, if one path fails, try another; leave no avenue unexplored that may possibly lead you into face to face relations with Him you seek".

Here are a set of suggested approaches to having a successful life-affirming association with God.

1. Establish contact with the Will of God.
2. Establish a practice of prayer as the medium of communicating with God.
3. Drop grudges and right wrongs within your circle of life.
4. Take up a neglected duty.
5. Keep in line with the Will of God.

The book provides a summary to living in accord with God's will by advocating to the reader to keep trying and never to give up. It says; "No one who has once learned to know the feel of the will of God, and taken it for his own, will be able to drift back easily into a careless or irresponsible life. He has acquired a taste and a thirst for the 'water of life', and can never be content again with the 'flesh-pots of Egypt'. Yet the routines of every day, the oblivion of every night, continually makes us deviate by slight and unobserved degrees from the path that the will of God marks out so plainly before us in our great moments; and unless we continually and skillfully endeavor to keep in line with it, we shall be everlastingly reproaching ourselves for perpetual small treasons that may easily grow into great treasons before we know it.

It concludes this way – "Every loyal servant of God must impose upon himself some kind of self-discipline. Even if we stray off from time to time, it is encouraging to know that if we are notably deficient – as most of us are – on one or two sides of the religious life, it is still possible to find God by another path. What each person needs to do, in working out his or her own method of self-discipline, is to begin with sort of practice most congenial to his religious type, and then enrich and correct it by practices that enshrines the Will of God in your heart".

Amen – that's what I said, at the end of this fascinating, even if rare and out of print book, for the moment. There are a few on the web for sale as "used" but worth the price.

It is my number 1 book for now.

kwame6@att.net

# THE ARMOR OF GOD

## EPHESIANS 6:10-18

"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11

### The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.



### Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed. →

### The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

### The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

### The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)

Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

### The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)

which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

## Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, <sup>13</sup> against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. <sup>14</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>15</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>16</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>17</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>18</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>19</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— <sup>20</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>21</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

**BUT PRAYER**

**Read: Acts 12:5-7**

**So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. Acts 12:5**

When I was a pastor, I often visited residents in rest homes. I'll never forget one dear elderly lady I met. She was blind and had been bedridden for seven years, yet she remained sweet and radiant. One day she told me about a dream she had. She was in a beautiful garden where the grass was a luxuriant

carpet beneath her and the fragrance of flowers filled the air.

She dropped to her knees, entranced by the scene. As her thoughts were drawn heavenward, she felt the need to pray for her own pastor, for me, and for others. When she awakened, however, she discovered that she was still in her hospital bed. With a smile she said to me, "You know, Pastor, at first I was a bit disappointed. But in a sense the dream was true. This old bed has been a garden of prayer these seven years!" prayer had made her room a holy place of meditation and blessings.

Prayer also made a difference when Peter was in prison (Acts 12). It isn't always easy to pray, for real intercession takes self-discipline. Many of us lapse into saying fine-sounding words without truly praying. God often drives us to our knees through the press of circumstances, where we are to "look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always" (1 Chronicles 16:11).  
Herb Vander Lugt

**Prayer Tips: "By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).**

**THE SONG OF MARY**

**Read: Luke 1:39-56**

**And Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord." Luke 1:46**

Mary was troubled. She had just heard the words, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Comforting words, it would seem, but startling because they were spoken by an angel.

Mary was about to be presented with the most magnificent news ever, yet she

was fearful. And when the angel told her she would have a baby, she exclaimed, "How will this be...since I am a virgin?" (v. 34).

Those two facts about Mary—that she was troubled and that she questioned the angel—tell us she was a person like us, with normal concerns.

Yet after listening to the angel, Mary called herself "the Lord's servant," and she said, "May your word to me be fulfilled" (v. 38). She was a humble, godly servant, with a willingness to do God's will.

We see more of Mary's heart in her

eloquent prayer, known as the Magnificat, the Song of Mary (vv. 46-55). Here she rejoiced in God's holiness (v. 49), His mercy (v. 50), His strength (vv. 51-52), His care for the hungry (v. 53), and His goodness to His people (vv. 54-55).

We can learn from Mary to trust God despite our concerns and fears, and to praise Him for His greatness. That's what the song of Mary is all about.

Dave Branon

**Prayer Tip: Study the Lord's Prayer. Let Jesus teach you to pray.**

**IN CONFERENCE**

**Read: Luke 11:1-13**

**One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1**

The president of a large company wanted to talk to the factory's manager about an urgent matter. But the manager's secretary said, "He cannot be disturbed. He's in conference—as he is every day at this time."

"Tell him the president wants to see him," the man responded impatiently.

The secretary firmly replied, "I have strict orders, Sir, not to disturb him while he is in conference."

Angrily, the man brushed past the secretary and opened the door to the manager's office. After one quick look he backed out, gently closed the door, and said, "I'm sorry!" The president had found his manager on his knees in front of his open Bible.

The purpose of a daily devotional time is to stimulate regular, intimate meetings with the King of Kings. We need to seek new orders and instruction

each day from the One who has planned our lives and provided for our needs.

Jesus himself spent regular time in prayer and inspired His disciples to pray (Luke 11:1). He gave them what we know as the Lord's Prayer and told them to keep asking, seeking, and knocking (vv. 9-10)

Have you spent time in conference with God today? It's never too late to start. M. R. DeHaan

**Prayer Tip: Pray out loud at times—especially if you find your mind wandering when you pray**

**A BOLD ENTRANCE**

**Read: Hebrews 4:14-16**

**Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7**

One morning, Scott Long and his wife had just awakened and were lying in bed when suddenly a young fellow entered their bedroom. He walked around the bed to Scott's side.

If the trespasser had been a total stranger, his entrance would've been criminal intrusion. If he had been a friend, his entrance would've been just

plain obnoxious. But it was their toddler son who had entered their bedroom, jumped on the bed, and boldly said, "I want in the middle." Scott was struck with the beauty of a child's security in knowing he wanted.

We are welcome in our heavenly Father's presence as well. Hebrews 4:16 tells us we can "approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." We can approach Him confidently about anything—our needs and our desires—knowing that He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

Writer Phillips Brooks said, "If man is man and God is God, to live without prayer is not merely an awful thing; it is an infinitely foolish thing."

Let's not be foolish and ignore the help we can find in prayer to our Father. Instead, let's approach Him with the boldness of a child who knows he is loved and wanted by his father.  
Anne Cetas

**Prayer Tips: Get E. M. Bounds's book Power through Prayer.**



# A Prayer for Our Nation

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move every human heart, especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from  
*The Book of Common Prayer*

### Question: "Is the ACTS formula for prayer a good way to pray?"

**Answer:** The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. *ACTS* is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13), except for thanksgiving.

The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

**Adoration** – The *A* in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

**Confession** – The *C* in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word *confess* means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

**Thanksgiving** – The *T* represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

**Supplication** – The *S* stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others’ needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is the ACTS formula for prayer biblical? The acronym itself isn’t found in the Bible, but it can serve as a guide, especially when we are learning how to pray. Remember, prayer isn’t a formula, and each prayer doesn’t have to cover every type of prayer. God wants us to talk from our hearts and express ourselves to Him. As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him more.



### Question: "What is the five-finger prayer?"

**Answer:** The five-finger prayer is a method to help people remember categories of people to pray for. It is a memory device used as an aid to prayer.

**The little finger**, or the pinkie, is the smallest finger, and it represents the individual who is praying. We need to pray for ourselves, but in humility we need to remember that we are the least important.

**The ring finger** this is usually the weakest of our fingers, and it reminds us to pray for the weak and the sick among us.

**The middle finger** is the tallest finger, and it reminds us to pray for our leaders.

**The pointer finger**, or the index finger, reminds us to pray for people who point the way—teachers and church leaders.

**The thumb** is the thickest and strongest digit, and when the hand is at rest, the thumb is the nearest to the rest of the body, reminding us to pray for family and friends—people who are closest to us.

The five-finger prayer has been popularized by Pope Francis. There is nothing specifically Roman Catholic about the five-finger prayer; it is simply one method to help people remember whom to pray for, similar to a prayer list. Since we all have our hands with us, the reminder of those in need of prayer is constant.

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RUNNING FROM GOD

**From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. Jonah 2:2**

Julie and Liz kayaked off the coast of California, scouting for humpback whales. Humpbacks are known for being active near the surface, making them easy to spot. The two women got the surprise of their lives when one surfaced directly underneath them. An onlooker caught footage of their encounter that showed the large mouth of the whale dwarfing the women and their kayaks. After briefly going underwater, the women escaped unharmed.

Their experience offers perspective on the biblical account of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a “huge fish” (Jonah 1:17). God had instructed him to preach to the Ninevites, but because they’d rejected God, Jonah didn’t feel they were worthy of His forgiveness. Instead of obeying, he ran away and took passage on a ship. God sent a dangerous storm, and he was thrown overboard.

God provided a way to preserve Jonah from certain death on the high seas, sparing him the far-worse consequences of his actions. Jonah “called to the Lord” and God listened (2:2). After Jonah admitted his wrongdoing and expressed his praise and acknowledgment of God’s goodness, he was—at His command—expelled from the fish “onto dry land” (V. 10).

By God’s grace, when we acknowledge our sin and express faith in Jesus’ sacrifice, we’re spared the spiritual death we deserve and experience new life through Him. Kirsten Holmberg

**When have you “run away” from God?  
How have you experienced new life through Jesus?**

Dear God, I acknowledge my sin and thank You for providing for me a new life through Jesus.

Visit [ODBU.org/OT226](http://ODBU.org/OT226) to hear the story of Jonah, who ran away from God.

Today’s Scripture: Jonah 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup> From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. <sup>2</sup> He said: “In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. <sup>3</sup> You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. <sup>4</sup> I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’ <sup>5</sup> The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. <sup>6</sup> To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit.

<sup>7</sup> “When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup> Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. <sup>9</sup> But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’” <sup>10</sup> And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

INSIGHT

God’s pursuit of Jonah is remarkable because at first, everything and everyone obeyed God except the prophet Jonah! In chapter 1, the wind (V. 4), the tempest (V. 15), and the pagan sailors (VV. 12-15) obey God, as does the great fish (V. 17). In chapter 2, the fish still obeys (V. 10), and in chapter 3, the pagan population of Nineveh obey God in repentant faith (V. 5). In chapter 4, the wind and the worm obey Him (VV. 7-8). God pursued Jonah every step of the way, and when the second call came, the prophet himself finally obeyed (VV. 3:1-3). Bill Crowder

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GETTING RID OF BAGGAGE

**Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him. Genesis 33:4**

In college, I studied William Shakespeare’s writing for a semester. The class required a giant textbook containing everything Shakespeare had ever written. The book weighed several pounds, and I had to carry it for hours at a time. Lugging that weight around caused my back to hurt, and it eventually broke a metal fastener on my bookbag!

Some things are just too heavy for us to carry. Emotional baggage from past hurt, for example, can weigh us down with bitterness and hatred. But God wants us to have freedom through forgiving people and, when possible, reconciling with them (Colossians 3:13). The deeper the pain, the longer this may take. That’s okay. It took many years for Esau to forgive Jacob for stealing his birthright and blessings (Genesis 27:36).

When the two finally reunited, Esau graciously forgave his brother and even “embraced him” (V. 33:4). Not a word was exchanged before they both burst into tears. Over time, Esau had let go of the anger that made him consider murder (V. 27:41). And all those years gave Jacob the chance to see the magnitude of how he’d harmed his brother. He was humble and respectful throughout the reunion (VV. 33:8-11).

In the end, both brothers came to the place where neither required anything from the other (VV. 9, 15). It was enough to forgive and be forgiven and walk away free from the heavy baggage of the past. Jennifer Benson Schuldts

**What types of offenses are hardest for you to forgive? How does forgiving others reflect your relationship with your heavenly Father?**

Dear God, please set me free from bitterness and anger.

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 33:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the

two female servants. <sup>2</sup> He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. <sup>3</sup> He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

<sup>4</sup> But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. <sup>5</sup> Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. “Who are these with you?” he asked.

Jacob answered, “They are the children God has graciously given your servant.” <sup>6</sup> Then the female servants and their children approached and bowed down. <sup>7</sup> Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down. <sup>8</sup> Esau asked, “What’s the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?”

“To find favor in your eyes, my Lord,” he said.

<sup>9</sup> But Esau said, “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.”

<sup>10</sup> “No, please!” said Jacob. “If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably. <sup>11</sup> Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need.” And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

INSIGHT

Jacob and Esau were twins born to Isaac and Rebekah. Before their birth, God told Rebekah: “Two nations are in your womb...; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23). From Esau’s line sprang the Edomites (36:9), enemies of the Israelites. From Jacob, the younger, sprang the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob convinced Esau to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew (VV. 29-34) and tricked his father into giving him the firstborn’s blessings that was due to Esau (VV. 27:1-29). Although they had a rocky relationship, we read of their reunion and Esau’s forgiveness in today’s text (VV33:1-9).

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## How can I learn to trust that God is in control?

Before we can learn to trust that God is in control of all of life's circumstances, we have to answer four questions: Is God really in control? How much control does He have? If He is not in complete control, then who/what is? How can I learn to trust that He is in control and rest in that?

Is God really in control? The concept of the control of God over everything is called the "sovereignty" of God. Nothing gives us strength and confidence like an understanding of the sovereignty of God in our lives. God's sovereignty is defined as His complete and total independent control over every creature, event, and circumstance at every moment in history. Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent, God does what He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases. God is in complete control of every molecule in the universe at every moment, and everything that happens is either caused or allowed by Him for His own perfect purposes.

"The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, 'Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand'" (Isaiah 14:24). Nothing is random or comes by chance, especially not in the lives of believers. He "purposed" it. That means to deliberately resolve to do something. God has resolved to do what He will do, and nothing and no one stands in His way. "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (Isaiah 46:10). This is our powerful, purposeful God who is in control of everything. That should bring us great comfort and help to alleviate our fears.

But exactly how much control does God have? God's total sovereignty over all creation directly contradicts the philosophy of open theism, which states that God doesn't know what's going to happen in the future any more than we do, so He has to constantly be changing His plans and reacting to what the sinful creatures do as they exercise their free will. God isn't finding out what's going to happen as events unfold. He is continuously, actively running things—ALL things—here and now. But to think He needs our cooperation, our help, or the exercise of our free will to bring His plans to pass puts us in control over Him, which makes us God. Where have we heard that lie before? It's a rehash of Satan's same old lie from the Garden—you shall be like God (Genesis 3:5). Our wills are only free to the extent that God allows us that freedom and no farther. "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'" (Daniel 4:35). No one's free will trumps the sovereignty of God.

Some people find it appealing to think that Satan has control over a certain amount of life, that God is constantly revising His plans to accommodate Satan's tricks. The book of Job is a clear illustration of just who has the sovereign power and who doesn't. Satan came to God and, in effect, said, "Job only serves you because you protect him." So God gave Satan permission to do certain things to Job but no more (Job 1:6–22). Could Satan do more than that? No. God is in control over Satan and his demons who try to thwart God's plans at every step.

Satan knew from the Old Testament that God's plan was for Jesus to come to the earth, be betrayed, crucified and resurrected, and provide salvation for millions, and if there was any way to keep that from happening, Satan would have done it. If just one of the hundreds of prophecies about the Messiah could have been caused by Satan to fail to come to pass, the whole thing would have collapsed. But the numbers of independent, "free will" decisions made by thousands of people were designed by God to bring His plan to pass in exactly the way He had planned it from the beginning, and Satan couldn't do a thing about it.

Jesus was "delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). No action by the Romans, the Pharisees, Judas, or anyone else kept God's plan from unfolding exactly the way He purposed it from before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1 says we were chosen in Him before the world was even created. We were in the mind of God to be saved by faith in Christ. That means God knit together Satan's rebellion, Adam and Eve's sin, the fall of the human race, and the death and crucifixion of Christ—all seemingly terrible events—to save us before He created us. Here is a perfect example of God working all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

Unlimited in power, unrivalled in majesty, and not thwarted by anything outside Himself, our God is in complete control of all circumstances, causing or allowing them for His own good purposes and plans to be fulfilled exactly as He has foreordained.

Finally, the only way to trust in God's sovereign control and rest in it is to know God. Know His attributes, know what He has done in the past, and this builds confidence in Him. Daniel 11:32b says, "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." Imagine that kind of power in the hands of an evil, unjust god. Or a god that really doesn't care about us. But we can rejoice in our God's sovereignty, because it is overshadowed by His goodness, His love, His mercy, His compassion, His faithfulness, and His holiness.

But we can't trust someone we don't know, and there is only one way to know God—through His Word. There is no magic formula to make us spiritual giants overnight, no mystical prayer to pray three times a day to mature us, build our faith, and make us towers of strength and confidence. There is only the Bible, the single source of power that will change our lives from the inside out. But it takes effort, diligent, everyday effort, to know the God who controls everything. If we drink deeply of His Word and let it fill our minds and hearts, the sovereignty of God will become clear to us, and we will rejoice in it because we will know intimately and trust completely the God who controls all things for His perfect purpose.

[www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)

### **Greatest Blessings**

How can you obtain the things that make life rich and filled with peace, material necessities and right relationships? Jesus tells us how: **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

We are told to have God's righteousness or rightmindedness. Develop a right thought pattern. Right thinking, governed by intelligence, is positive not negative, unselfish not self-centered, creative not destructive, kindly not hateful. Employ these attitudes and everything that you need for the good life will be multiplied for you.

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### **You Are Never Alone**

**Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Genesis 28:15**

Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go on in whatever situation you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through.

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### **Depression Lifted**

Many are sick because they are basically unhappy. For this condition a medicine is offered in these words: **A merry heart does good, like medicine... Proverbs 17:22**

Joy has healing value, but gloom is sickening. This is why Jesus so emphatically tells us to rejoice. Learn to live joyfully. Take a hopeful and optimistic attitude. Think happy thoughts, say happy things and put joy into people's lives. The more you do this, the more surely you will keep your own spirits high.

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### **Clean Mind and High Spirits**

**You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. John 15:3**

This Spirit Lifter tells us that the word of Jesus Christ, when recorded in consciousness and held there, can make you clean of all guilt. How? The answer is by forgiveness from wrong thoughts and actions, by changing thoughts from impure to wholesome thinking, by filling the mind with faith so you experience a truly marvelous brain-and-soul-washing.

The ugliness of hate is washed from the mind; all sin are forgiven. The inner cleanness thus gained is an amazing source of high spirits.

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### **You Are Stronger Than You Think**

Scarcely any joy equals this realization: You have it in you to meet all your responsibilities. This consciousness contributes immeasurably to high spirit and happiness. Is difficult to face each day with a sense of inability and weakness. With such an attitude, life seems too much, and discouragement sets in.

Here is the antidote for such a dismal feeling: **Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10**

This is a most important promise God makes to us. No matter how overwhelming your problem, you need have no fear. You are not to let anything dismay you, for God says He will strengthen and help you. In fact, He promises He will hold you up and make you adequate for any situation.

Accept this great fact. Hold this verse strongly in your consciousness until it sends its rugged courage throughout your entire life.

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### **Forever Refreshed**

To revitalize the spirit is a necessity, and this need is met by an amazing formula: **but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14**

Every longing of the human spirit finds enduring satisfaction in the life-giving message of Jesus. This message becomes a perpetual well of self-renewing inspiration. From the water of life, our spirit is endowed with continuous refreshment. We never thirst again.

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### **Love Given Returns to You**

When we are on the "outs" or in conflict with other people, it tends to depress us. Try this cure: **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. Romans 12:10**

Practice kindly affection. Always take a generous, patient attitude. Practice consideration. Put the other person ahead of yourself. Courtesy has amazing power to dissipate ill will.

Free your heart of jealousy and resentment. The love you give will return to you, and your spirit will be lifted to new levels.

“

*In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.*

*I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.*

*I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.*

*If God be for me, who can be against me?*

*I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.*

*My enemies are fleeing before me.*

*God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.*

*He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.*

*I am the head and not the tail.*

*He has given me power to make wealth.*

*I dwell in the secret place.*

*I have His protection and provision.*

*God is my refuge, my fortress.*

*I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.*

*No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.*

*God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands*

*lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.*

*1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.*

*I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

*1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.*

*Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,  
or any other disease cannot enter my body.*

*I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,*

*the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.*

*“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgment You shall condemn.*

*This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,*

*and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.*

*I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.*

*Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them  
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.*

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!*



## THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

**I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...**

**WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHEL-ANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!**

**AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND."**

**"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."**

**BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE.**

**SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.**

**IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.**

**BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."**

**AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.**

**BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.**

**SOURCE UNKNOWN**

**Grace, God's Power Freely Given**

**For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Roman 12:3**

If you've been in the world very long, you've learned that there are very few days that go exactly the way we'd like them to go. Thankfully, God is never going to put us in a situation without giving us the ability to be in it with joy. I believe God gives us His special grace for every situation. Here's how I like to define grace: God's power to help us do whatever it is we need to do. You can have that power today, but you have to receive it, and the only way to receive it is by faith. Romans 12:3 says that "God has allotted to each a measure of faith." ask yourself today, "What am I doing with my faith?" are you putting your faith in yourself, or in

others, or in your circumstances? That's not living in grace, that's just living by your own strength and works. And it won't get the job done! But when you release your faith and trust God to do what you can't do, you're putting your faith in Him. Then grace, God's power, will come through the channel of faith and will enable you to do things that will amaze you and others. Here's my longer definition of grace: It's God's power coming to us freely, meaning it doesn't cost us anything other than just putting our faith in God, enabling us to do with ease what we could never do on our own with any amount of struggle or effort. Put your faith in God. He wants to give you His grace today.

**Prayer Starter: God, I know that life won't always go the way I want it to, but I trust in You. By faith, I receive Your grace, the power You have freely given to help me walk through any situation I face today.**

**The Importance of Finishing**

**I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. John 17:4**

Several years ago I read a verse that caused me to weep before the Lord. In John 17:4, Jesus says, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." This is saying that following God means finishing what He's called us to do. Ever since reading that verse, it's become very important to me that I not just do what God has called me to do, but that I finish what He's called me to do. There are a lot of people who step out and begin a journey with God, but I don't think there are nearly as many who finish it. The apostle Paul said, '...If only I may finish my course with joy...' (Acts 20:24). I'm determined to finish God's call for me and enjoy every minute of it! That's what I want

for you, too, to enjoy every single day of your life and finish what God's called you to do. But most of this is up to us. It's not all up to God. He has done His part and given us everything we need in Christ. It's up to us to keep learning, growing, and letting the Spirit of God work in us. Take time to consider the things that God has called you to do and ask yourself, "What am I doing today to finish strong what God has set before me? God has great plans for you. Receive them by faith and go after them with all your heart. Today, I want you to make a commitment to finish strong. It's a commitment I know God will honor.

**Prayer Starter: God, like Jesus, I want to be able to say that I have completed the work You have for me. Thank You for working in me to give me the power and the desire to live for Your pleasure and finish my course with joy!**

**Faith to See Yourself Through God's Eyes**

**Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4**

Whatever you're facing in life, or whatever is coming in your future, God has already given you the faith for it. It may not look like it, and you may not feel like you have what it takes to overcome, but faith in God isn't based on our circumstances or how we feel. The enemy would like for you to believe that you don't have a chance in life, that you're too weak, too poor, too whatever. But God has a different view of you. God sees you through the eyes of love. He sees not what you can be, but what He has invested in you, not what you or others may see. Seeing yourself the way God sees you leads to a life of overwhelming victory. But it takes faith. You can't just hear that God loves you and sees you as His child, you have to believe it. It takes faith to

move forward and overcome the challenges of life. And faith does you no good if you don't know how to release it. You have to release your faith in order for it to work. We release through our words, actions and, of course, through prayer. It's up to us to act. First John 4:4 is a scripture we quote a lot, and almost anytime I say this verse in a church or meeting, everybody claps and cheers. But how many people really believe that "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world? The truth is, the One in you is greater and He loves you. So stretch your faith today and see your self the way God sees you. It doesn't matter what the enemy wants you to see or how things might look. Our faith overcomes through the One who lives in us!

**Prayer Starter: God, I believe that You love me and that You have given me the power to overcome. As Your child, I will act on the faith You have given me every day, trusting in You and overcoming any obstacle that comes my way.**

**Oh Yes You Can!**

**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13**

We all face temptation, it's an unavoidable part of life. The question is not, "Will you be tempted?" The question is, "When you're tempted, will you be ready?" I really want you to get this: You can beat temptation. Stop saying, 'Joyce, I just don't think I can.' Take 'I can't!' out of your vocabulary. In your own strength and by your own ability, you're right. You can't. But when you put God's Word in your heart, when you lean on His strength and trust in His promises, there's no temptation you can't overcome. Over the years, I've noticed five things that make all the difference in overcoming temptation. First, you've got to be wise. Think about the choices you're making and the consequences before you make

them. Wisdom looks ahead. Next, you have to believe that you can resist temptation. Condemnation, guilt and shame work off of momentum, if you stop them early, they lose their power, but once they get rolling, they're hard to stop. Third, think of facing temptation as normal life. If you're expecting a fight, you'll always be ready. Fourth, avoid areas of weakness. Don't put yourself in situations where you can easily fall. If you struggle with managing your money, don't go to the mall when you can't afford to buy anything! And finally, don't give yourself too much credit. We don't graduate from being tempted. It's so easy to think you've matured beyond stumbling, and once that happens, you make yourself an easy target. God wants you to trust Him to bring victory in every area of your life. By His grace, you can!

**Prayer Starter: God I realize temptation is a part of life. Help me not to be caught off guard or surprised when it comes. Thank You for the wisdom and grace to overcome any and all temptations and to live in Your victory.**

**Old Testament**

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library. There are four types of writing in the Old Testament: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

**LAW**

**Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.**

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

**HISTORY**

**Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.**

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

**POETRY**

**Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.**

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

**PROPHECY**

**Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.**

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor

**New Testament**

There are 27 books in the New Testament library. There are three types of writing in the New Testament: History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

**HISTORY**

**Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts**

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

**LETTERS**

**PAUL'S LETTERS**

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

**OTHER LETTERS**

**Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.**

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

**PHOPHECY**

**Revelation**

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



## HUMBLY ASKING FOR HELP

***All the believers were together and had everything in common. Acts 2:44***

As our party approached, my wife and I started planning. With many people coming, should we pay a caterer to cook? If we do the cooking ourselves, should we buy a barbeque? With a small chance of rain on the day, should we buy a tent too? Soon our party was getting expensive, and even a little antisocial. By trying to provide everything ourselves, we were missing an opportunity to receive the help of others.

The Bible's vision of community is one of both giving and receiving. Even before the fall, Adam needed help (Genesis 2:18), and we're called to seek others' advice (Proverbs 15:22) and share our burdens (Galatians 6:2). The early church held "everything in common," benefiting from each other's "property and possessions" (Acts 2:44-45). Instead of living independently, they shared, borrowed, gave, and received in beautiful interdependence.

We ended up asking guest to bring a salad or dessert to our party. Our neighbors brought their barbeque, and a friend brought his tent. Asking for help enabled us to forge closer relationships, and the food people made brought variety and delight. In an age like ours, being self-sufficient can be a source of pride. But God gives His grace "to the humble" (James 4:6), including those who humbly ask for help. Sheridan Voysey

**What stops you from asking for help? What do you currently need that you could borrow instead of buy?**

Dear God, thank You for making us relational creatures.  
Please help me to live humbly, sharing both my wealth and needs with others.

**Today Scripture:** Acts 2:42-47

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possession to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### INSIGHT

Acts 2:44 pictures the unity and interdependence of the church: "All the believers were together and had everything in common." This same idea comes into view again in chapter 4: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possession was their own, but they shared everything they had" (V. 32). The English words common (2:44) and shared (4:32) are translations of the Greek word *koinos*, which means "common," "ordinary," "belonging to generality." In addition, it can refer to things that are ceremonially unclean. In Acts 4:32, we also find a word with the opposite meaning, *idios*, which is translated "their own": "No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own." The early church snapshots in these chapters reveal a dynamic, spirit-formed unity and humility that led believers to selflessly give and receive. Arthur Jackson

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,  
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**Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606**

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day.  
Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

**PLEASE** dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

**CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY**

***We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?***

**Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way**

For more information contact:

Church office 860-344-9527.or

Rev. Gregory B. Wimborne: Days: 860-616-3834

**Willingness — Surrender — Faith — Action**

***“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”  
Isiah 43:19 (NIV)***

**“Level-Up”  
2024 — 2025  
Transitioning to God’s Next**

**Honoring Our Past — Celebrating Our Present — Investing in Our Future!!**

**Vision: “Level-Up”**

**GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE**

We are looking forward to the **next level** that God will take us individually and collectively as a church!!!!

As we continue to move forward it is going to take Unstoppable Faith and a Godly Mindset with every fiber of our being to be determined that we are going to a **next level** in Christ!!!

Let's **Level-Up!!!!** **Level Up** Spiritually!!! **Level-Up** as we Grow Numerically and **Level-Up** as we give Financially!!!

**Level-Up** in allowing God to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us to do ministry!!!

Cross Street let's go to the **next level** together! **Level-Up!!!**

**The Vision Statement in four simple words:**

**These words are expressing the minimum expectations of members**

**Members are to GATHER**

Every member should attend faithfully a worship service every week. Christians are commanded to worship the Lord together. Read Acts 2:42-47. not only are we called to worship the Lord, but we are also to encourage one another when we gather together.

**Members are to CONNECT**

That's the word picture to describe locking hands and arms with others. We are called to connect together in a small group (ministry, organizations, class leader system, bible study, Sunday school, and others).

**Members are to GO**

The members should be involved in at least one ministry in the church each year. Many should be involved in ministries that got them involved outside the walls of the church. The Great Commission should be at the heart of what we do as part of the process of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).

**Members are to GIVE**

Every member should be a regular and faithful financial giver to the church. Jesus, Himself, said it best:  
*“wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be”*  
(Matthew 6:21).

The **VAN MINISTRY** is rolling once again!!!

If you or someone you know needs a ride to Worship Service please call the church office by Friday by 12:00 p.m. (NOON)  
If you leave a message please be sure to leave your name, number, and address for the pickup.

**For more information, visit our Website: [WWW.crossstreetamezion.org](http://WWW.crossstreetamezion.org)**

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

#### Sunday

**SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL**  
**9:00 a.m.—09:45 a.m.**  
ALL CLASSES ARE IN PERSON

#### Adults

Sister Sylvia Pina / Brother Ken Simmons

#### Children

Ms. Carolyn Smith / Rev. Grant.

Any questions call: 860-490-3199  
Gloria Malloy, Church School Superintendent.

#### WORSHIP SERVICE

**10:00 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>  
Meeting ID: 959 628 798  
(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

#### Facebook

Tell your family and friends from across the Country.  
We can be watched worldwide.

#### Monday—Friday

#### DAILY PRAYER

**@6:00 am**

Dail-in Phone#: (978) 990-5105  
Access Code: 204730#

#### Tuesday

#### BIBLE STUDY

Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Dail-in Phone#: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 562 367 770  
Passcode: 596307

#### Wednesday

#### PRAYER MEETING

06:00 p.m.  
Dial-in Phones#: (978)990-5105  
Access Code: 204730#

#### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Dail-in Phone#: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 848 5162 1015  
Passcode: 266443

#### We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

Online: [crossstreetamezion.org](http://crossstreetamezion.org)

1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/TJXKDEVIXE>)
2. Text 73256 (Thecross)
3. PayPal,
4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440

5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct 06457,
6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
7. Call the office for someone to pick up
8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website; <http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/Give>)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### OCTOBER

Saturday, October 12, 2024  
@ 9:30 a.m.

#### CHILDREN'S ANNUAL TRIP TO LYMAN ORCHARDS WITH THE BUDS

Come enjoy an afternoon of apple picking and choosing a pumpkin. Contact or see Sis. Deidre Mention or Sis. Vanessa Cockrell for more information!

Saturday, October 12, 2024  
@ 11:00 a.m.

#### Missionary Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2024  
@ 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

#### Vaccination Clinic

Offering COVID-19 Booster Doses,

Pneumonia Vaccine, RSV Vaccine, Seasonal Influenza Vaccine, High Dose (Seniors) Shingles Vaccine, & T-dap Vaccine

Tuesday, October 15, 2024  
@ 7:00 p.m.

#### BIBLE STUDY

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 206-6099  
Meeting ID: 562 367 770  
Passcode: 596307

Thursday, October 17, 2024  
@ 4:00 p.m.

#### Amazing Grace Soup Supper

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Friday, October 18, 2024  
@ 6:00 p.m.

#### Children's Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, October 19, 2024  
@ 5:00 p.m.

#### Women's Fashion Show

Tuesday, October 22, 2024  
@ 7:00 p.m.

#### BIBLE STUDY

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 206-6099  
Meeting ID: 562 367 770  
Passcode: 596307

Thursday, October 24, 2024  
@ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

#### Foundations: Homebuyers 101 & Fair Housing Class

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Friday, October 25, 2024  
@ 6:00 p.m.

#### Children's Choir Rehearsal

The Cross Street Journal is published Quarterly (January, April, July, October). It can be found on our website: [crossstreetamezion.org](http://crossstreetamezion.org) & in the front lobby of the church.

If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: [ken462012@gmail.com](mailto:ken462012@gmail.com).

If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the 1st of the following Months, February, May, August, November. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons ([ken462012@gmail.com](mailto:ken462012@gmail.com)), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**

Saturday, October 26, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

**Care for Children Training**

More information to come!!

Sunday, October 27, 2024

@ 3:00 p.m.

**Trunk-or-treat**

WE NEED YOUR TRUNKS!!!

We are looking for trunk decorators for this year's TRUNK-or-TREAT!!! So all members, family, & friends come and participate to make this event "spooktacular" for our children!!! Sign-up sheet is on the table in the Narthex or see Sis. Michele Clay. **THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT & PARTICIPATION!!!**

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

@ 7:00 p.m.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 206-6099

Meeting ID: 562 367 770

Passcode: 596307

**NOVEMBER**

Every Tuesday

@ 7:00 p.m.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 206-6099

Meeting ID: 562 367 770

Passcode: 596307

Every Thursday @ 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**GREIF SHARE**

Every Thursday beginning September 5th - December 5th Grief Recovery Support Group

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

@ 7:00 p.m.

**Women's Bible Study via Zoom**

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 205-6099

Meeting ID: 848 5162 1015

Passcode: 266443

Thursday - Friday, November 7-9, 2024

**North Eastern Episcopal District Leadership Training Institute**

Hosted by: Cross Street

Sunday, November 10, 2024

**Laity Sunday**

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

@ 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Vaccination Clinic**

Offering COVID-19 Booster Doses, Pneumonia Vaccine, RSV Vaccine, Seasonal Influenza Vaccine, High Dose (Seniors) Shingles Vaccine, & T-dap Vaccine

Thursday, November 14, 2024

@ 12:00 p.m.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall. We invite all of our Seniors to come out for some good food, fun, and fellowship!!

Thursday, November 14, 2024

@ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Foundations: Homebuyers 101 & Fair Housing Class**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Friday, November 15, 2024

@ 6:00 p.m.

**Children's Choir Rehearsal**

Sunday, November 17, 2024

**Family & Friends**

Sunday Thursday, November 21, 2024 @ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Foundations: Homebuyers 101 & Fair Housing Class**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Saturday, November 23, 2024

**Women's Ministry Christmas Bazaar**

**December**

Every Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Dail-In Phone#: (929) 206-6099

Meeting ID: 562 367 770

Passcode: 596307

Thursday, December 5, 2024

@ 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**GREIF SHARE**

Grief Recovery Support Group

Thursday, December 5, 2024

@ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Foundations: Homebuyers 101 & Fair Housing Class**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Thursday, December 12, 2024

@ 12:00 p.m.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall. We invite all of our Seniors to come out for some good food, fun, and fellowship!!

Friday, December 13, 2024

@ 6:00 p.m.

**Children's Choir Rehearsal**

Thursday, December 19, 2024

@ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Foundations: Homebuyers 101 & Fair Housing Class**

here at The Cross in the Fellowship Hall.

Friday, December 20, 2024

@ 6:00 p.m.

**Children's Choir Rehearsal**

Sunday, December 22, 2024

(This date subject to change)

**Mother Annie Hunter Christmas Dinner**

# The Month of OCTOBER IS Church School Rally Month



Jesus answered, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Matthew 4:4 NIV

**CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH**  
Rev. Robyn M. Anderson, Pastor

440 West Street · P.O. Box 225 · Middletown, CT 06457 Church (860) 344-9527 · Fax (860) 344-1740  
www.crossstreetamezion.org Email: crossstreetchurch@snet.net  
"A Church Where Everybody is Somebody and Christ is Lord of All"

## Seasonal Vaccine Clinics

Cromwell, Middlefield and Middletown



- Walk-in only.
- Must be 19 years or older to get vaccinated.
- Residency is **not** required.
- **Please bring your insurance card** - there may be a copay depending on your insurance.
- Masks are optional.

For More Information Call:  
Cromwell Health Dept. (860) 632-3426  
Middletown Health Dept. (860) 638-4960

Scan the QR code or visit our website to print consent forms ahead of time:



Vaccines provided by **STOP & SHOP Pharmacy**

Vaccines Available:  
COVID-19 Booster Doses  
Pneumonia Vaccine  
RSV Vaccine  
Seasonal Influenza Vaccine & High Dose (Seniors)  
Shingles Vaccine  
T-dap Vaccine

- 9/25 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Cromwell Town Hall Gymnasium  
41 West Street, Cromwell
- 9/28 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Middletown Recreation Center  
140 Wildermer's Way, Middletown
- 10/11 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
245 deKoven Drive, Middletown
- 10/12 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
South Fire District  
445 Randolph Road, Middletown
- 10/16 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Cromwell Town Hall Gymnasium  
41 West Street, Cromwell
- 10/15 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Cross Street AME Zion Church  
440 West Street, Middletown
- 10/21 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
Middletown Senior Center  
61 Dewart Terrace, Middletown
- 10/25 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Middlesex Chamber of Commerce  
393 Main Street, Middletown
- 10/26 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Westfield Fire District  
653 East Main Street, Middletown
- 10/30 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
Independent Day School  
115 Laurel Brook Road, Middlefield
- 11/12 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Cross Street AME Zion Church  
440 West Street, Middletown
- 11/13 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Cromwell Town Hall Gymnasium  
41 West Street, Cromwell

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of  
A spouse, child, family member, or friend.

# GRIEF SHARE

Every Thursday  
(except Thanksgiving)  
September 5th—December 5th 2024  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
@ 440 West Street, Middletown, CT 06457  
Phone: (860) 344-9527  
Email: [griefshare2023csc@gmail.com](mailto:griefshare2023csc@gmail.com)  
Contact us today if you would like to attend.

CROSS STREET AME ZION CHURCH  
Before Saul became Paul he had scales over his "eyes"! Was he awake to the Truth?

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:4  
Love is patient love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

ROMANS 7:14-24  
We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.  
I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

START DATE 19 OCT 2024 1:30PM  
MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT MINISTRY

## SAVE the DATE

# WOMEN EMBRACING GOD'S MISSION

Empowered and Expectant  
YAMS Retreat 2024  
NOVEMBER 16 - 17

GUEST SPEAKER  
Rev. Paula Blue

Registration Fee: \$75

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/5T3R5YLDTXTH71HE7](https://forms.gle/5T3R5YLDTXTH71HE7)

## HOLIDAY BAZAAR & CRAFT FAIR

Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church is planning for the 2024 Holiday Bazaar and Craft Fair. This year the fair will held on Saturday, November 23rd from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The cost to rent a table is \$50.00 which includes a table and a chair, provided by the church. Setup time will be from 7:00 am to 9:00 am.

Please complete form and send payment no later than November 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH  
C/O Sylvia D. Pina  
440 West Street, Middletown, CT 06457

Vendor (Tables and Tablecloths provided) \_\_\_\_\_ Full Long Table \$50.00  
If electricity is needed check here

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Promoting Item(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Method of Payment: CashApp\$ \_\_\_\_\_ or Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Check# \_\_\_\_\_)

Please make checks payable to Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church. PLEASE NO CASH IN MAIL.

CASHAPP: TheCross440

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!

**Saturday, November 23rd**  
**9:00am to 2:00pm**

ENJOY A DAY FILLED WITH VENDORS, FOOD, & FUN!!

Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church  
440 West Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

Presented by the Cross Street Women's Ministry

## THE WIZ

@ THE BUSHNELL  
166 CAPITOL AVE. ~ HARTFORD, CT  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025 @ 6:30 P.M.**

We are trying to get 30 women to ease on down the road to see this fabulous play!  
Group tickets go on sale the end of September.

If you're interested in attending the show, a \$50.00 non-refundable deposit is due to reserve your ticket by October 1st.

We will have the final cost of the ticket when you make your deposit.

Final balance will be due by December 14th.

Contact Information  
Tracey Stanley Lisa Rush  
[Traceystanley16@yahoo.com](mailto:Traceystanley16@yahoo.com) OR [Lrush66@comcast.net](mailto:Lrush66@comcast.net)  
Pastor Robyn Anderson  
[revmanderson@gmail.com](mailto:revmanderson@gmail.com) ~ (860) 344-9527 ~ (860) 817-5330



### CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223

Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

[crossstreetchurch@snet.net](mailto:crossstreetchurch@snet.net)

[www.crossstreetamezion.org](http://www.crossstreetamezion.org)

**Sunday School — See Page 31**

**Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.**

**Rev. Robyn M Anderson**

Pastor

Email: [revrmanderson@gmail.com](mailto:revrmanderson@gmail.com)

**The Rev. Dr. Moses L. Harvill,**

Presiding Elder

**Mrs. Laurenna Crenshaw**

Missionary Supervisor

**The Right Reverend**

**George Crenshaw**

Presiding Prelate

#### Ministerial Staff

Rev. William D. Wilson

Rev. Ella Frances Perry

Rev. Karen Nesmith

Rev. James Battle

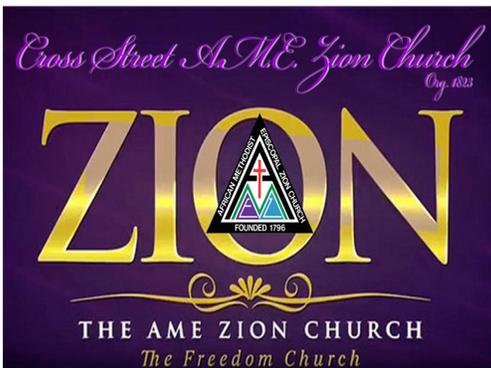
Rev. Myrtle Turner

Rev. Gregory Winborne

Rev. Joyce Johnson

Rev. Earlene Grants

Sister Felicia Freeman



## Vision: "Level-Up"

### GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE

#### "I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."  
I'm whispering "I was lost,  
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble  
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak  
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed  
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches  
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not holier than thou.  
I'm just a simple sinner  
Who received God's good grace,  
somehow!

#### The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom  
come, Thy will be done in 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, for  
ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:  
Write the vision and make it plain on  
tablets, that he may run who reads it.  
Habakkuk 2:2

#### The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel  
saying, "Oh, that You would bless me  
indeed, and enlarge my territory,  
that Your hand would keep me from  
evil, that I may not cause pain!" So  
God granted him what he requested.  
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

#### "God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-  
ful, and sharper than any two-edged  
sword, piercing even to the dividing  
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the  
joints and marrow, and is a discerner of  
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*  
Hebrews 4:12

**Prayer:** Forever, O Lord, your Word is  
settled in heaven. I bless you because  
you have given me rest according to  
all that you have promised to me. Not  
one word of all your good promises  
has ever failed. In light of this truth, I  
will walk in your Word at all times.  
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp  
unto my feet, and a light unto my  
path. All of your words are pure, O  
God, and you are a shield to me. Lord

God, your way is perfect, and your  
Word is tried. You are a shield and a  
mighty buckler to me as I trust in you.  
With your Word you made the heav-  
ens, O Lord. all of your promises are  
yes in Christ, unto your glory, O God.  
You have spoken through your Word  
since ancient times, in order to give  
light to those who sit in darkness, and  
you guide my feet in the way of peace.  
Your Word is quick, alive, and power-  
ful, and sharper than any two-edged  
sword. It pierces even to the dividing  
asunder of my soul and spirit, and of  
my joints and marrow, and is a dis-  
cerner of the thoughts and intents of  
my heart.  
Father, I am thankful for your Word,  
and I will endeavor to walk in the light  
of your Word all the days of my life.

**If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???**

#### Doxology

*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*  
Jude 24-25