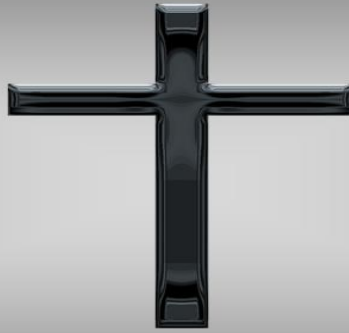




THE CROSS



"A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL"



January-February 2024 — Volume 28 Issue 1

Vision: "Level-Up"

GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE

LENT

Wednesday, February 14 — Saturday March 30



Pastor's Prayer

Rev Robyn M Anderson

Dear Lord, bless our Pastor as she delivers and preaches Your Holy Word;

Lift her spirit as she embraces Your divine call on her life;

Guide her as she ministers to Your flock and walks in Your wisdom;

Teach her the inner meanings of Holy Scripture through divine revelation;

Reward her works as she daily serves You and fulfills the purpose for which she was created.

Lovingly Presented,
The Cross Street Church Family

From The Pastor's Desk

Lenten Prayer

GOD OF GOODNESS AND MERCY,

HEAR MY PRAYER AS I BEGIN THIS LENTEN JOURNEY WITH YOU.
LET ME BE HONEST WITH MYSELF AS I LOOK INTO MY HEART AND SOUL,
NOTICING THE TIMES I TURN AWAY FROM YOU. GUIDE ME AS I HUMBLY SEEK TO REPENT AND RETURN TO YOUR LOVE.

MAY HUMILITY GUIDE MY EFFORTS TO BE RECONCILED WITH YOU AND LIVE FOREVER IN YOUR ABUNDANT GRACE.

TRANSFORM ME THIS LENT, HEAVENLY FATHER. GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO COMMIT MYSELF TO GROW CLOSER TO YOU EACH DAY.

AMEN.

Prayer for Lent

Loving God,

As the season of Lent unfolds, you call us to return again and again.

As you invite us to reflect on your love made visible in the person of Jesus, align our lives more closely with you through prayer, fasting and generous giving.

Bless our desire to accompany Jesus' suffering here and now in the crucified people of our world.

With your grace, may we live Lent fully and move with transformed hearts into the abundant life of Easter morning.

Amen.

A Prayer for Lenten Grace

Loving God,
During the sacred season of Lent, bring me closer to you.
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.
Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul and remind me of the grace of simplicity.
Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.
May this season be a grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.
Amen.



Visit our Facebook page

Visit Our Website:
WWW.crossstreetamezion.org

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.

"What does the Bible say about faith?"

Faith resides at the core of Christianity and the Christian life. While the Bible has much to say about it, faith is a challenging concept to define. A biblical definition of faith reaches beyond mere belief—the simple acknowledgment that God exists—into the realm of trust. Genuine faith involves abandoning all human reliance on self-efforts and placing total dependence upon God’s character, His actions, and His promises, as revealed in His Word.

Faith has many dimensions. One crucial facet of faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Biblical faith takes present-day possession of things not yet seen with our eyes but hoped for in the future. What God has revealed in His Word becomes our inner reality today. Rather than looking at life with our earthly eyes, faith sees through the lens of God’s promises.

The apostle Paul said, “We walk by faith and not sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith does not put trust in bank account balances, headline news, or the doctor’s report. “We don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things
(Faith on page 12)

"What does the Bible say about love?"

The Bible has a great deal to say about love. In fact, the Bible says that “love is of God” and “God is love” (1 John 4:7–8); in other words, love is a fundamental characteristic of who God is. Everything God does is impelled and influenced by His love.

The Bible uses several different words for “love” in the Hebrew and Greek, interchanging them depending on context. Some of these words mean “affectionate love”; others indicate “friendship”; and still others, “erotic, sexual love.” There is also a distinct word for the type of love that God displays. In the Greek, this word is *agape*, and it refers to a benevolent and charitable love that seeks the best for the loved one.

The Bible gives many examples of love: the caring provision of Boaz for Ruth; the deep friendship of David and Jonathan; the poetic, passionate love of Solomon and the Shulamite; the enduring commitment of Hosea to Gomer; the fatherly love of Paul for Timothy and John for the church; and, of course, the sacrificial, saving love of Christ for the elect.

Agape, the benevolent, selfless love that God shows, is mentioned often in the New Testament, including in the “love chapter,” 1 Corinthians 13. There, love’s
(Love on page 13)

"What is the definition of hope?"

There are two kinds of hope—worldly or temporal hope and the hope of believers. In a general sense, hope is a mental focus or feeling of anticipation regarding a future outcome, either of something we want to happen or wish to be true or don’t want to happen or be true. Secular hope is a subjective expectation; it may be solidly based or misguided, as it does not consider God’s will. We hope for things we want (*I hope I get the job; I hope she’ll marry me*). We hope for good outcomes (*I hope my child returns home safely; I hope I don’t get sick*). But worldly hope is not a virtue, as it usually contains some degree of uncertainty, doubt, and personal bias and can often be misdirected and selfishly motivated (Proverbs 10:28; 1 Timothy 6:17).

The biblical definition of *hope* is “the sure and confident expectation of receiving what God has promised us in the future.” The believer’s hope is not a faint or obscure wish but “an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19). In Scripture, hope is a virtuous quality because it contains no doubt, always trusting in God’s faithfulness and presence no matter the circumstances, whether good or bad (Psalm 71:5).

The apostle Paul includes hope among the three
(Hope on page 12)

Never Too Late to do the Right Thing

Recently, out of personal curiosity I did an internet search with this statement on my phone; “*how beneficial is drinking a glass of green smoothie EVERY day?*” Out of the scores of responses, I centered on one that caught my attention, mainly because it was written by a host of WebMd editorial contributors. Most of the other responses came from either individuals like me, or from companies and new start-ups trying to catch up on the never ending interest in the green smoothie phenomenon.

I say “never ending” because I have been involved with the green, predominantly vegetable, smoothies for almost thirty years nonstop. I was on the quest to find a solution to serious bouts of headaches, that none of my doctors had been able to help me solve. By a series of “try and errors” efforts, I started to juice my own morning beverage instead of the usual glass of orange juice that I used to love so much. I noticed almost instantaneously, that my headaches were reduced not only by the intensity, but also by the frequency.

That was in the mid to late 1980’s. Fast forward to today, 2020’s and I have become a poster person for the original curious question. I take in a daily ration of green vegetable smoothie the same way that I brush and floss my teeth every day. But the question was and still is: “*how beneficial is drinking a glass of green smoothie EVERY day?*”
(Right Thing on page 16)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Prayers	5	Sunday Church School	11	Daily Confession of Faith	23
Fruit of the Spirit	6	90 Devotions	13	Spiritual Inspiration	24
Name of God	7	The Armor of God	14	The Beauty of Holland	25
Daily Bible Reading	7	How to Pray	19	Joyce Meyer	26
Christian Season	8	Our Daily Bread	20	Bible’s Bird’s Eye View	27
Liturgical Color	8	Words To Live By	21	Activities	29
Fasting	9	Spirit Lifters	22		

PRAYERS



When You Need to Know the Love of God

Key Scripture: *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"* 1 John 3:1, NIV

Key Thought: God loves you!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for loving the world so much that you gave your only begotten Son, that

whosoever would believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.¹ Truly, there is no greater love than yours, Lord. Thank you for sending Jesus to redeem the world, and for saving me.

Help me, Father, to always remember that I am able to love only because you first loved me.² Because you love me, you've given me commandments to follow, and because I love you, I want to obey you always.³ Because you have saved me and made me a new creation in Christ, I can love others as you have loved me. Through this means, Lord, I know that others will realize that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.⁴

Thank you for your perfect love which casts out all fear from my life.⁵ Your amazing love shows me how to love sincerely, without any hypocrisy.⁶ Thank you Father.

I rejoice in the fact that there is no limit to your love, Lord. It is from everlasting to everlasting. You have poured your love abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit who has been given

to me.⁷ Strengthen me with might by the Holy Spirit so that I will be able to comprehend with all saints the full extent of your love.⁸

Your Son, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, dwells in my heart by faith, and I thank you that you are rooting and grounding me in His love. Above all else, Lord, I desire to know your love which passes knowledge and to be filled with your fullness.⁹

Thank you for loving me, Father.

References: (1) John 3:16; (2) 1 John 4:19; (3) John 14:15; (4) John 13:34-35; (5) 1 John 4:18; (6) Romans 12:9; (7) Romans 5:5; (8) Ephesians 3:18-20; (9) Ephesians 3:19.

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!

God's Faithfulness

Key Scripture: *"Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds"* Psalms 36:5

Key Thought: God is always there.

Prayer: Faithful Father, I know you are always there for me.¹ Thank you for calling me into fellowship with you through your Son.² Not one word of all your good promises has ever failed in my life,³ and I know you will never leave me nor forsake me.⁴ I rejoice in the certain knowledge, Father, that you are my very present help in times of need.⁵

Throughout my life I have never seen the righteous forsaken.⁶ Even when I am lacking in faith, Father, you are always faithful, Father, you are always faithful to me.⁷ I know you know me because I am yours.⁸ You always hear

my cry.⁹ You know my ways.¹⁰ You recognize my voice.¹¹ How I thank you that I am your servant and you always deal well with me.¹² Father, thank you for always being faithful to your Word.¹³ It gives me great confidence to realize that your Word will never return to you empty, but it will always accomplish what you desire, and it will achieve the purpose you have in mind.¹⁴

You always have, and I know you always will, faithfully accomplish your purposes in my life.¹⁵ I know you will keep me, Father.¹⁶ Your Word never fails.¹⁷ Thank you for letting me experience your great faithfulness in my heart and in my soul.¹⁸ Thank you for loving me.¹⁹ You are my faithful Father, and you always keep your covenant with me.²⁰

You, my great and glorious Father, will never permit my foot to be moved.

Thank you for never sleeping or slumbering as you watch out for me. I know you are watching out for me even now.²¹ Thank you for always being there for me.²² I rejoice in the knowledge that your mercy endures forever.²³

References: (1) 1 Corinthians 1:9; (2) 1 Corinthians 1:9; (3) 1 Kings 8:56; (4) Hebrews 13:5; (5) Psalms 46:1; (6) Psalms 37:25; (7) 2 Timothy 2:13; (8) 2 Timothy 2:19; (9) Psalms 28:1; (10) Psalms 1:6; (11) Psalms 141:1; (12) Psalms 119:65; (13) Psalms 119:65; (14) Isaiah 55:11; (15) 1 Thessalonians 5:24; (16) Genesis 28:15; (17) Joshua 23:14; (18) Joshua 23:14; (19) 1 John 4:19; (20) Deuteronomy 7:8-9; (21) Psalms 121:3-4; (22) Psalms 46:1; (23) Psalms 136:1.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers

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. (1 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. (1 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**; F A I T H F U L N E S S, *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

JANUARY

- 01) Genesis 1-2
- 02) Genesis 3-5
- 03) Genesis 6-9
- 04) Genesis 10-11
- 05) Genesis 12-15
- 06) Genesis 16-19
- 07) Genesis 20-22

- 08) Genesis 23-26
- 09) Genesis 27-29
- 10) Genesis 30-32
- 11) Genesis 33-36
- 12) Genesis 37-39
- 13) Genesis 40-42
- 14) Genesis 43-46
- 15) Genesis 47-50

- 16) Exodus 1-4
- 17) Exodus 5-7
- 18) Exodus 8-10
- 19) Exodus 11-13
- 20) Exodus 14-17
- 21) Exodus 18-20
- 22) Exodus 21-24
- 23) Exodus 25-27

- 24) Exodus 28-31
- 25) Exodus 32-34
- 26) Exodus 35-37
- 27) Exodus 38-40
- 28) Leviticus 1-4
- 29) Leviticus 5-7
- 30) Leviticus 8-10
- 31) Leviticus 11-13

FEBRUARY

- 1 Leviticus 14-16
- 2 Leviticus 17-19
- 3 Leviticus 20-23
- 4 Leviticus 24-27
- 5 Numbers 1-3
- 6 Numbers 4-6
- 7 Numbers 7-10

- 8 Numbers 11-14
- 9 Numbers 15-17
- 10 Numbers 18-20
- 11 Numbers 21-24
- 12 Numbers 25-27
- 13 Numbers 28-30
- 14 Numbers 31-33
- 15 Numbers 34-36

- 16 Deuteronomy 1-3
- 17 Deuteronomy 4-6
- 18 Deuteronomy 7-9
- 19 Deuteronomy 10-12
- 20 Deuteronomy 13-16
- 21 Deuteronomy 17-19
- 22 Deuteronomy 20-22
- 23 Deuteronomy 23-25

- 24 Deuteronomy 26-28
- 25 Deuteronomy 29-31
- 26 Deuteronomy 32-34
- 27 Joshua 1-3
- 28 Joshua 4-6

MARCH

- 1 Joshua 7-9
- 2 Joshua 10-12
- 3 Joshua 13-15
- 4 Joshua 16-18
- 5 Joshua 19-21
- 6 Joshua 22-24
- 7 Judges 1-4

- 8 Judges 5-8
- 9 Judges 9-12
- 10 Judges 13-15
- 11 Judges 16-18
- 12 Judges 19-21
- 13 Ruth 1-4
- 14 1 Sam. 1-3
- 15 1 Samuel 4-7

- 16 1 Samuel 8-10
- 17 1 Samuel 11-13
- 18 1 Samuel 14-16
- 19 1 Samuel 17-20
- 20 1 Samuel 21-24
- 21 1 Samuel 25-28
- 22 1 Samuel 22-24
- 23 2 Samuel 1-4

- 24 2 Samuel 5-8
- 25 2 Samuel 9-12
- 26 2 Samuel 13-15
- 27 2 Samuel 16-18
- 28 2 Samuel 19-21
- 29 Samuel 22-24
- 30 1 Kings 1-4
- 31 1 Kings 5-7

Name of God	Meaning	Application
EL ELOHE YISRAEL	God, the God of Israel	The God of Israel is distinct and separate from all false gods of the world.
EL ELYON	The God Most High	He is the Sovereign God in whom we can put our trust. El Elyon has supremacy over all false gods.
ELOHIM	The All-powerful One	God is the all-powerful creator of the universe. God knows all, creates all, and is everywhere at all times. The plural of "EL".
EL OLAM	The Eternal God The Everlasting God	He is the Beginning and the End, the One who works His purposes throughout the ages. He gives strength to the weary.
EL ROI	The God Who See Me	There are no circumstances in our lives that escape His fatherly awareness and care. God knows us and our troubles.
EL SHADDAI	The All Sufficient One, The God of the Mountains, God Almighty	God is the all-sufficient source of all of our blessings. God is all-powerful. Our problems are not too big for God to handle.
IMMANUEL	God With Us "I AM"	Jesus is God in our midst. In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

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.

CHRISTIAN SEASONS

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.

Lent

Lent is the period of time to reflect on the events that led Jesus to Calvary. It begins with Ash Wednesday and covers a period of forty days (excluding Sundays) culminating with Holy Week (including Passion/Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). Lent is a time of fasting, sacrifice, and preparation.

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.

A guideline given by some money managers is as follows: Give 1/10 (tithe of your income to God). Put 1/10 in savings. Put 1/10 in an emergency account until three months of pay is set aside. Live on the remaining 7/10 with freedom to work towards giving as much as possible to God's work.

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.

juliesunne.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!

The Faith of Elizabeth and Mary / Sharing Hope and Courage

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

Background Scripture: **Luke 1:1-25, 39-45, 56-60**

EXALT!

Declaration: Luke 1: 36-45, 56

³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zachariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to the home.

Affirmation: We empathize with Mary's desire to visit Elizabeth.

ENGAGE

We need people with whom we can share our joys and struggles in life. To whom do we turn when we need to process major life events? Just as Mary found a kindred spirit in her relationship with Elizabeth, so also can we find spiritual encouragement and support from those who share our faith in God.

Break into small groups and discuss the following questions: 1) Can you think of times when we usually need someone with whom to share hope and mutual encouragement for the future? What happens when we have no one with whom to share such feelings? 2) What surprising events or developments have you experienced that could only be shared with relatives or friends? Share those with one another. What was the outcome of sharing the experience? Did it bring relief, joy, contentment? Explain. 3) Can you think of great things that have had small beginnings; things, for instance, of which no one could foresee all the implications under current circumstances? Discuss those experiences with one another. What was the outcome?

EDUCATE:

Luke 1:36-42: Mary's rush to see Elizabeth should be read in the context of Luke 1:36 as Mary's excitement, born of her confidence in the angel's message, that she and Elizabeth would both be experiencing miraculous births and in sharing their experiences could affirm and support each other's faith over the months of pregnancy. Elizabeth's greeting contains two blessings (Luke 1:42), following the Old Testament model in which the second blessing is understood to cause the first blessing (Genesis 14:19-20; Deuteronomy 7:14; Ruth 2:20). Elizabeth affirms Mary's response of faith as further reason for joy, especially considering Zechariah's skepticism, even when faced with an angel (Luke 1:20): Elizabeth's response demonstrates that confident faith in response to God's calling results in our obedience. Elizabeth's exciting words are significant on multiple levels: They are clearly a prophetic announcement (Luke 1:41. Compare 1:42 and John 1:15), both in the blessings and in her confident identification of Jesus' identity (Luke 1:42-45). But, they also fulfill the angel's promise of the Holy Spirit's indwelling spoken to Zechariah in 1:15 as well as introducing the role of the Holy Spirit (critical in Luke and Acts) in empowering God's people in faith.

(Courage 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.

(Courage from page 10)

Luke 1:43-45, 56: In the lesson, “we see how joy can be infectious, from the unborn John the Baptist to his mother Elizabeth, to even the shared joy between Elizabeth and Mary” (Standard Lesson Commentary 2023-2024, Large Print Edition, p. 146). John the Baptist recognizes Jesus from the womb, and his mother Elizabeth accepts his joyful identification with a confidence that allows her to enter Mary’s joy completely: It is a testament to the appropriately developed power of community in that the experience of sharing this confidence in God produced overwhelming joy and even greater faith because of its mutual affirmation. There is no doubt that Elizabeth’s description of Jesus as “my Lord” is meant to affirm his divine nature (compare Luke 1:76; 2:11; 3:4; 6:5; 20:42-44; Acts 2:36). It is a shockingly bold statement of faith shared by these mothers early on in Jesus’ incarnation. “While Mary possibly would not have been showing in pregnancy yet, her state was revealed to Elizabeth by the Holy Spirit. Not only that, but the identity of the child was also revealed to her. Elizabeth could not be silent concerning the events that were transpiring. She may have been in seclusion concerning her own pregnancy, but when the mother of the Lord shows up on her doorstep, Elizabeth became a loud proclaimer of the truth.”

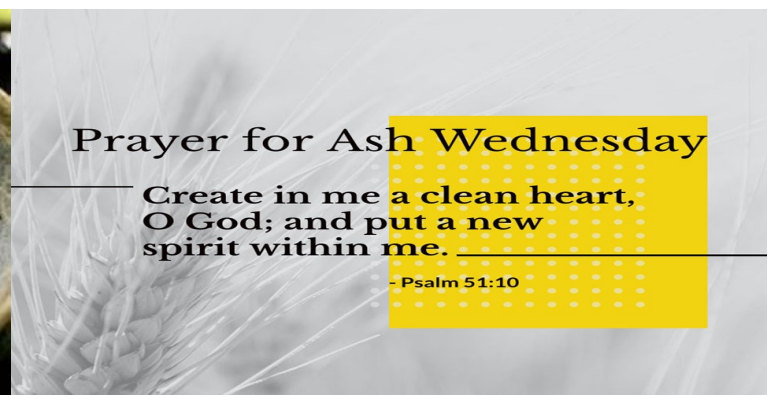
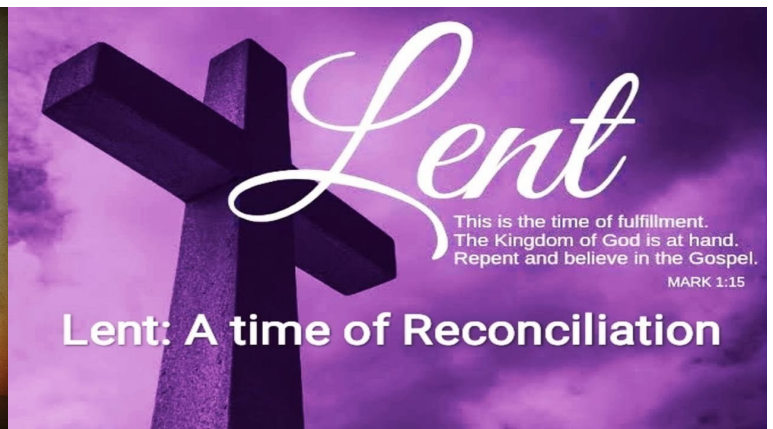
ELEVATE:

Discuss how we may acquire growing trust in the truth of the biblical Advent stories and in belief in God’s ability to fulfill God’s promises in our lives. Explain how may gain strength to face the future when we hear of and think on the faith of Elizabeth and Mary. Are we growing in faith as we participate in the faith community? How so? Or how not? How might we bolster one another’s faith?

iThink:

1. Plan for participants to tell of their joy as they anticipated the birth of a child.
2. Note the difference in the ages of Elizabeth and Mary and that neither expected the news that the other was pregnant. Why were they reluctant to believe the miracle that was happening to them? What gave them courage to accept and share their joy?
3. Consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the conception of both John and Jesus. In what way is the Holy Spirit in the birth of children today?
4. Encourage participants to write about or discuss the involvement of the faith community as they planned for the birth of a child or other critical life events.
5. Share a hymn or prayer appropriate to the Advent season. How does this act of worship help us express our dependence on each other as well as God as we live day-by-day?

KEY VERSE: When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women.” Luke 1:41-42a



(Faith from page 3)

we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever” (2 Corinthians 4:18, NLT). When the world seems to be falling apart, our faith stands secure on the rock-solid, trustworthy promises of God and His Word.

Faith begins with God. It is His gift, not the result of any human effort or achievement. God initiates the relationship between Himself and humans by revealing Himself to them (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:19–20) and lovingly persuading them to come to Him (Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Isaiah 30:18), just as Jesus called the disciples to follow Him (Matthew 4:18–22). But then God expects us to respond to Him in faith: “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, NLT). Failure to trust God was at the heart of the first sin (Genesis 3:1–7). Ever since the fall of man, God has been calling people back to faith—to a place of trust and obedience to Him.

Faith is and always has been the only means of salvation. In the Old Testament, the covenantal bond was the believer’s expression of faith. God initiated the covenant, and believers responded in faith, actively obeying His Word and trusting in the Lord to fulfill His promises. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham “believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith” (NLT; see also Romans 4:22; Galatians 3:6). The prophet states, “Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God” (Habakkuk 2:4, NLT).

In the New Testament, it is by faith that people receive God’s grace in Jesus Christ and, through Him, the gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8–9). Paul emphasized the centrality of faith in the believer’s life: “For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, ‘It is through faith that a righteous person has life’” (Romans 1:16–17, NLT; see also Romans 3:27–28; 10:9–10).

Faith results in numerous blessings and benefits. At the top of the list are the gifts of salvation, justification, and peace with God (Romans 5:1–2; Galatians 2:15–16; 1 Peter 1:8–9). Jesus makes His home in our hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:17). We receive forgiveness of sin (Acts 10:43; Luke 7:48–50), adoption into God’s family (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26), God’s protection and power (1 Peter 1:5; Matthew 17:20; Luke 8:43–48), freedom to draw near to God with a clean conscience (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 10:22), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), sanctification (Acts 26:17–18), and a new life in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:20), all through faith. Moreover, we are granted victory over death and eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 11:25–27).

The Bible plainly teaches that faith is not just a mental attitude. James explains that saving faith is revealed in a person’s actions. He writes, “What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?” (James 2:14, NLT). James is not saying that we are saved *by* works, but that faith and good deeds go together: “Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works” (James 2:26, NLT). Good works are proof that our faith is alive.

A biblical concept of faith includes believing that God exists and that He is wholly trustworthy, so much so that we base our lives on Him and His Word, doing what it says, no matter what our physical eyes tell us. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we obtain “the victory that has overcome the world” (1 John 5:4–5).

www.GotQuestions.org

(Hope from page 3)

indispensable Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love is the greatest because God values it most (1 Corinthians 13:13) and because it is eternal (1 Corinthians 13:8). Neither faith nor hope will be needed in heaven; we won’t have to trust an unseen God or anticipate His appearance because we will see Him and be with Him in the perfection of His presence forever.

Hope and faith are closely tied because both operate based on trusting God and living according to what is unseen. The author of Hebrews explains that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1, ESV). Regarding hope, Paul reasons, “But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?” (Romans 8:24). Like faith, hope is built on our unwavering confidence in God’s goodness and power to do what He says He will do because of His unfailing love for us (Psalm 33:18; 146:5). Such confidence declares about our Savior, “No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame” (Psalm 25:3). Biblical hope, like faith, takes custody here and now of God’s good promises yet to come.

Christians use *hope* in both senses. A pastor may say, “I hope today’s sermon blesses you.” The apostle Paul writes, “I hope to see you” (Romans 15:24) and “I hope to come to you soon” (1 Timothy 3:14) in his letters to fellow believers. But the believer’s hope is so much more than wishful thinking. The apostle Peter explains that God “has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). We have the “hope of eternal life,

(Hope on page 13)

(Hope from page 12)

which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time" (Titus 1:2). We don't merely wish we'll go to heaven when we die; the Bible says we can know it with all certainty: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

Paul's hope was so secure in his eternal future that he was willing to suffer and die for it: "I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6; see also Acts 26:6). Paul said that without faith and hope in God's promise of resurrection life, Christians "are more to be pitied than anyone in the world" (1 Corinthians 15:19, NLT).

The biblical definition of *hope* includes not only the act of confident expectation but also the object of it—"Christ Jesus our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1). The psalmist writes, "For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth" (Psalm 71:5). Jesus Christ is the "hope of Israel" (Jeremiah 14:8; Acts 28:20) and of all nations and peoples (Isaiah 42:4; Matthew 12:21; Romans 15:12-13; 1 Timothy 4:10).

Having only temporal hope in people and things of this life is, in reality, to live in a state of hopelessness, "without hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12). By contrast, the believer's hope cannot be frustrated or hindered by anything in this life. We know what we have safely "stored up for [us] in heaven" (Colossians 1:5), where our treasures are kept secure (Matthew 6:19-20).

www.GotQuestions.org

(Love from page 3)

characteristics are listed: love is patient and kind; love doesn't envy, boast, or dishonor others; love is not proud or self-seeking; love is not easily angered, doesn't keep a record of wrongs, and doesn't delight in evil; rather, love rejoices with the truth; love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres; love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Of the greatest of God's gifts, faith, hope, and love, "the greatest . . . is love" (verse 13).

The Bible says that God was motivated by love to save the world (John 3:16). God's love is best seen in the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf (1 John 4:9). And God's love does not require us to be "worthy" to receive it; His love is truly benevolent and gracious: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The Bible says that, since true love is part of God's nature, God is the source of love. He is the initiator of a loving relationship with us. Any love we have for God is simply a response to His sacrificial love for us: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Our human understanding of love is flawed, weak, and incomplete, but the more we look at Jesus, the better we understand true love.

The Bible says that God's love for us in Christ has resulted in our being brought into His family: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1). Just as the father in the parable showed love to his prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), so our Heavenly Father receives us with joy when we come to Him in faith. He makes us "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6, NKJV).

The Bible says that we are to love others the way that God loves us. We are to love the family of God (1 Peter 2:17). We are to love our enemies—that is, we are to actively seek what is best for them (Matthew 5:44). Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25). As we show benevolent, selfless love, we reflect God's love to a lost and dying world. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The Bible says that our love for God is related to our obedience of Him: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3; cf. John 14:15). We serve God out of love for Him. And God's love for us enables us to obey Him freely, without the burden of guilt or the fear of punishment.

First John 4:18 says that "perfect love drives out fear" (this is again the word *agape*). The dismissal of the fear of condemnation is one of the main functions of God's love. The person without Christ is under judgment and has plenty to fear (John 3:18), but once a person is in Christ, the fear of judgment is gone. Part of understanding the love of God is knowing that God's judgment fell on Jesus at the cross so we can be spared. Jesus described Himself as the Savior: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). The very next verse reminds us that the only person who must fear judgment is the one who rejects Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38-39). God's love does not wax and wane; it is not a fickle, emotional sensation. God's love for sinners is why Christ died on the cross. God's love for those who trust in Christ is why He holds them in His hand and promises never to let them go (John 10:29).

www.GotQuestions.org

NEVER TOO BUSY

Read: psalm 145:8-21

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. Psalm 145:18

College student rent a house from my sister and her husband. One night, a thief attempted to break in. when the young women living there called the police to tell them that a break-in was in progress, the operator responded in an unusual way: "You'll have to call back in

the morning. We're just too busy right now." That response was very disturbing! The young women had done the right thing by calling the police, but for some reason her plea for help was disregarded. That kind of indifference is upsetting.

Indifference never happens when we go to God in prayer. We may not always feel that God is listening, but He is. He cares, and He will respond. The Bible reminds us that we can take comfort in the Fact that our God is deeply concerned with what concerns our

hearts: "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all ho call on him in truth" (Psalm 145:18). When we call out to Him, we will never get a disinterested response.

Rather than distancing himself from us when we cry to Him, our heavenly Father draws close to us in our time of need. He is never too busy fir His child's prayers—He hears us when we call. Bill Crowder

Prayer Tips: Go on a personal prayer retreat — if only for a few hours.

MINDLESS PRAYER

Read: Joshua 1:1-9

No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Joshua 1:5

Sometimes I am ashamed of my prayers. Too often I hear myself using familiar phrases that are more like mindless filler than thoughtful, intimate interaction. One phrase that annoys me, and that I think might offend God, is "Lord, be with me." In Scripture, God has

already promised not to leave me.

God made this promise to Joshua just before he led the Israelites into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:5). The author of Hebrews later claimed it for all believers: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (13:5). In both cases, the context indicates that God's presence has to do with giving us the power to carry out His will, not our own will, which is generally what I have in mind in my prayers.

Perhaps a better prayer would be something like this: "Lord, thank you for your indwelling Spirit, who is willing and

able to direct me in the ways you want me to go. May I not take you where you don't want to go. May I not enlist you to do my will but humbly submit to doing yours."

When we are doing God's will, He will be with us even without our asking. If we're not doing His will, we need to ask for His forgiveness, change our course, and follow Him. Julie Ackerman Link

Prayer Tip: Pray for those who don't know Jesus worldwide—that they would meet Him, perhaps even miraculously..

TIME TO PRAY

Read: Psalm 70

Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, Lord, to help me. Psalm 70:1

One morning, when I was a young child, I was sitting in the kitchen, watching my mother prepare breakfast. Unexpectedly, the grease in the skillet in which she was frying bacon caught fire. Flames shot into the air and my mother ran to the pantry for some baking soda to throw on the blaze.

"Help!" I shouted. And then I added, "Oh, I wish it was time to pray!" "It's time to pray" must have been a frequent household expression, and I took it quite literally to mean we could pray only at certain times.

The time to pray, of course, is anytime—especially when we're in crisis. Fear, worry, anxiety, and care are the most common occasion for prayer. It is when we are desolate, forsaken, and stripped of every human resource that we naturally resort to prayer. We cry out with the words of David, :Come quickly, Lord, to help me" (Psalm 70:1).

John Cassian, a fifth-century theologian, wrote of this verse: "This is the terrified cry of someone who sees the snares of the enemy, the cry of someone besieged day and night and exclaiming that he cannot escape unless his Protector comes to the rescue."

May this be our simple prayer in every crisis and all day long: "Lord, help me!" David Roper

Prayer Tip: Pray over public spaces in your neighborhood, such as parks and school.

GOD'S ANSWERS

Read: Daniel 9:20-27

While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. Daniel 9:21

Daniel poured out his heart to God (Daniel 9:3). He had read Jeremiah and rediscovered God's promise that Israel's captivity in Babylon would last 70 years. So, in an effort to represent his people before God, Daniel fasted and prayed.

He pleaded with God not to delay in recuing His people (v. 19).

When we pray, there are things we can know and other things we cannot. For instance, we have the assurance that God will hear our prayer if we know Him as our heavenly Father through faith in Jesus, and we know that His answer will come according to His will. But we don't know when the answer will come or what it will be.

For Daniel, the answer to his prayer came in miraculous fashion, and it came immediately. While he was praying, the angel Gabriel arrived to provide the

answer. But the nature of the answer was as surprising as the quick reply. While Daniel asked God about "70 years," the answer was about a prophetic "70 weeks of years." Daniel asked God for an answer about the here and now, but God's answer had to do with events thousand of years into the future.

Focused as we are with our immediate situation, we may be shocked by God's answer. Yet we can know that the answer will be for His Glory. Dave Branon

Prayer Tips: "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

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)

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

(Right Thing from page 3)

I have my 30+ years of practical, objective response but since I am not a medical doctor, I will like to copy pieces from the WebMd response in order to be even more objective, and to allow you, the reader, to make up your mind.

There's a specific reason why I am doing this – but you'll have to read to the end to find out. For now, here is the WebMd response:

“Green smoothies are nutrient-rich blends of fruits and vegetables. They've become a popular way for people to meet their recommended daily intake of vitamins and minerals. Unlike juices, green smoothies retain the beneficial fiber content from [whole foods](#).

At their most basic, green smoothies combine [leafy greens](#) like spinach, kale, arugula, and microgreens with a base liquid like water. While these greens alone can make for a bitter-tasting smoothie, there are tons of combinations that improve its flavor profile and add nutritional content.

But added ingredients can also increase a smoothie's calorie count by increasing its sugar and fat content. Leafy greens are naturally [low in these nutrients](#), so make sure to be mindful when adding ingredients to ensure a balanced smoothie.

Based on your preferences, healthy additions to a green smoothie can include:

- Fruits like apple, mango, banana, avocado, or pineapple
- Other vegetables like carrot, beetroot, cucumber, or cauliflower
- Nuts and seeds like almond or peanut butter, hemp or chia seeds, and [flax meal](#)
- Herbs and spices like ginger, cinnamon, [turmeric](#), or cocoa powder
- Natural sweeteners like honey, dates, or [stevia](#)

Creamy additions like yogurt, [dairy or non-dairy milk](#), or silken tofu. Smoothies are also an easy way to take supplements like protein powder, [spirulina](#), or other [powdered vitamins and minerals](#) just by adding a serving into the blender.

Nutrition Information

The nutritional content of your green smoothie will vary based on what you include.

As a baseline, an eight-ounce serving with a half-cup each of spinach, kale, apple, and banana contains:

- Calories: 120
 - Protein: 3 grams
 - Fat: 0 grams
 - Carbohydrates: 30 grams
 - Fiber: 5 grams
- Sugar: 15 grams

This combination is a good source of:

[Vitamin C](#)
[Vitamin A](#)
[Manganese](#)
[Potassium](#)
[Calcium](#)

Green smoothies are also a great source of [B vitamins](#). The B vitamins found in leafy greens, like [folate](#), [vitamin B6](#), and [niacin](#), help your body release energy from food and can promote a healthy nervous system.

Green smoothies are a great way to incorporate leafy greens into your diet. These greens are a rich source of vitamins and minerals and are most nutritious when [consumed raw](#) like in a smoothie.

It's also easy to customize a green smoothie to your taste. However, while adding ingredients can improve the green smoothie's flavor, they can also increase the amount of calories, carbohydrates, fats, and sugars.

Including leafy greens in your smoothie can provide health benefits like:

(Right Thing on page 17)

(Right Thing from page 16)

Digestive Health

The [insoluble fiber](#) in leafy greens helps food to pass through your digestive system, reducing issues like diarrhea, constipation, and bloating. Fibrous foods also help you to feel fuller for longer, which can aid in meeting [weight-loss goals](#).

Bone Strength

Leafy greens like kale and spinach are a great source of [vitamin K1](#). Research has documented that people with a high intake of vitamin K1 are at a decreased risk for bone fractures, [osteoporosis](#), and decreased bone mineral density.

Immunity Support

Leafy greens are much higher in vitamin C than other vegetables. Vitamin C is known to [support the immune system](#), fight infection, and help maintain healthy cellular function throughout our bodies.

Lower Risk of Chronic Disease

Leafy greens are high in [antioxidants](#) like [beta-carotene](#) and vitamin C, which help to prevent and may even reverse [oxidative damage](#) caused by free radicals. [Free radicals](#) occur naturally but increase due to lifestyle and environmental factors, and the damage they cause to our cells is linked with chronic issues like [inflammation](#), heart disease, and cancer.

Lower Cholesterol

[Bile acid sequestrants](#) are compounds used in medicine to lower cholesterol and are found naturally in leafy greens. Maintaining healthy [cholesterol levels](#) keeps fatty deposits from building up on your artery walls, reducing your [risk of heart disease](#).

Potential Risks of Green Smoothies

Because there are many ways to make a green smoothie, it's possible to add too many sugars, carbohydrates, or fats. The potent vitamin content in leafy greens may also be unsuitable for people with certain medical conditions. Things to consider when whipping up your green smoothie include:

Weight Gain

Leafy greens are naturally low in calories and fat. However, common green smoothie additions like fruits, nut butters, sweeteners, or milks can add excessive amounts of these nutrients to a single serving. Too much fat or caloric intake can lead to unwanted weight gain, so measure your portions so you know what's in your drink.

Blood Sugar

[Excess sugar](#) not only leads to weight gain, but may also increase your blood sugar levels, increasing the risk of diabetes. Fruits and nut butters contain numerous vitamins and minerals, but can also have high natural sugar content, so moderate the amount added to your green smoothie.

Medication Interference

The high Vitamin K content in leafy greens can reduce the effects of certain [anticoagulant](#) drugs. While people taking blood-thinners do not need to avoid vitamin K, you should still talk to your doctor about how much you should consume".

End of WebMd article.

Now, here is the reason you should be interested in this essay. Beginning this coming New Year – 2024, and God willing, Pastor Anderson and I have agreed to stage a one day a week class on everything you need to know about green vegetable smoothies, in the church, for a period yet to be determined. Look out for announcements, information and further details on this brand new venture that we want to bring to everybody's interest.

Stay tuned and God bless you and continue to keep you healthy.

Kwame6@att.net



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.

© Copyright 2002-2021 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. www.GotQuestions.org

SEEING BY FAITH

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-8

During my morning walk, the sun hit the waters of Lake Michigan at a perfect angle to produce a stunning view. I asked my friend to stop and wait for me as I positioned my camera to take a pic. Because of the position of the sun, I couldn't see the image on my phone's screen before I snapped the shot. But having done this before, I sensed it would be a great picture. I told my friend, "We can't see it now, but pictures like this always come out good."

Walking by faith through this life is often like taking that picture. You can't always see the details on the screen, but that doesn't mean the stunning picture isn't there. You don't always see God working, but you can trust that He's there. As the writer of Hebrews penned, "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (11:1). By faith we place our confidence and assurance in God—especially when we can't see or understand what He's doing.

With faith, not seeing doesn't prevent us from "taking the shot." it just might make us pray more and seek God's direction. We can also rely on knowing what's happened in the past as others have walked by faith (VV. 4-12) as well as through our own stories. What God has done before, He can do again.
Katara Patton

What are you trusting God to do even though you may not see it clearly right now? How has He delivered you or your family in the past?

Heavenly Father, thank You for all the ways You've provided for me in the past. Help me to walk by faith even if I can't see all You're doing.

¹ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancient were commended for. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. ⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

INSIGHT

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish believers in Jesus who were facing persecution (Hebrews 10:32-35) and were thus in danger of drifting away and reverting back to Judaism. The unnamed author encouraged them to live by faith and to persevere (VV. 36-39) and explained what living by faith means (11:1). The author listed examples of many people who'd lived by such faith to illustrate that this is the only way to please God: "Anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (V. 6). These faithful believers trusted God despite their adverse circumstances and the disappointment of not yet "[receiving] what had been promised" (V. 39). K. T. Sim

TRUSTING GOD

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. Psalm 20:7

Today's Scripture: Psalm 20

I needed two medications urgently. One was for my mom's allergies and the other for my niece's eczema. Their discomfort was worsening, but the medicines were no longer available in pharmacies. Desperate and helpless, I prayed repeatedly, Lord, please help them.

Weeks later, their conditions became manageable. God seemed to be saying: "There are times when I use medicines to heal. But medicines don't have the final say; I do. Don't place your trust in them, but in Me."

In Psalm 20, King David took comfort in God's trustworthiness. The Israelites had a powerful army, but they knew that their biggest strength came from "the name of the Lord" (V. 7). They placed their trust in God's name—in who He is, His unchanging character and unfailing promises. They held on to the truth that He who is sovereign and powerful over all situations would hear their prayers and deliver them from their enemies (V. 6)

While God may use the resources of this world to help us, ultimately, victory over our problems comes from Him. Whether He gives us a resolution or the grace to endure, we can trust that He'll be to us all that He says He is. We don't have to be overwhelmed by our troubles, but we can face them with His hope and peace. Karen Huang

In your personal battles, where or in what do you place your trust? How might trusting in God's name change the way you cope with these challenges?

Heavenly, Father, give me the courage to trust in You. Help me to believe that You're all that You promise to be.

¹ May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. ² May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. ³ May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. ⁴ May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. ⁵ May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests. ⁶ Now this I know: The Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand. ⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. ⁸ They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. ⁹ Lord, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!

INSIGHT

A careful reading reveals that Psalms 20 and 21 are related. Psalm 20 is a prayer for the protection (VV. 1-2) and victory of the king, God's anointed (VV. 6, 9). The prayer of the psalmist, "Lord, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!" (V. 9) is shown to be answered in Psalm 21. there, in a more direct way, the writer talks to God about His dealings with the king (VV. 1-7) and his enemies (VV. 8-12). The idea of trusting in God (20:7) is reiterated in 21:7: "For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken." psalm 20 closes with petition and Psalm 21 with praise: "Be exalted in your strength, Lord; we will sing and praise your might" (V. 13) Arthur Jackson

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan Reprinted by Permission

Prayer for God's Blessings throughout the New Year!

We know that the joy of the Lord is our strength and, as we meditate on Your Word, saturate our hearts.

Teach us to confess what the word says so we can see the manifestation of our prayers.

Your word will not return to You void of fulfillment, but it will accomplish everything for which You sent it.

Remind us to not worry about what is happening around us, but to trust You.

Read full prayer @ christianstt.com

PRAYER FOR DIRECTION IN THE NEW YEAR

Lord, I seek direction in the new year, I pray that you will direct me in the name of Jesus.

Lord, I refuse to work in darkness in the coming year,

So please light my path and teach me the right thing to do.

I pray that your Holy Spirit will be my guide throughout the year

I pray that your Holy Spirit and power will protect my family, friends, and me in the new year in the name of Jesus

Amen

THE GRACEFUL CHAPTER

PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*"Let this new year be
our year of progress"*

Our heavenly Father,
As we start the new year,
We pray that you protect us from all evil arrows in Jesus' name.
We pray that your grace will be sufficient for us in Jesus' name.
Oh Lord, we pray that you give us the power that we need to journey through the new year,
We pray that in the coming year, we experience your mercy in the name of Jesus Christ.
Let this new year be our year of progress and divine upliftment in Jesus' Mighty Name.
Help our destiny helpers locate us in the new year in the mighty name of Jesus Christ
We pray that you Oh Lord will keep watching and guiding us throughout the year in Jesus' name.
Thank you Father for answering our prayers.
We know that we have been blessed.

Amen

THE GRACEFUL CHAPTER

Let's Pray...
**Dear Lord,
We pray for Peace in the world.
We pray for healing across the land
In bodies and hearts.
For you are our Great Healer.**

LindaEvansShepherd.com

A FAMILY PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Father, thank You for our perfectly unique family. We desire to put You first in our hearts and home this year. Please meet us in the midst of our crazy, busy lives. Show us when we need to slow down and simply be . . . with each other and with You. May Your Spirit guide us to discover truth in the middle of our messes. Help us to find faith-building moments in daily activities as well as opportunities to share Your love with those we meet each day. We trust You to bring beautiful growth for our family as we plant simple seeds of faith. In Jesus Name, Amen.

minno LIFE

A Prayer for the New Year

Lord,
Whether I leave behind
a year of joy or of trials and difficulties,

I pause to *give thanks*.
Thank you for being with me
every day of every year.

Thank you for making all things **new**
and for giving me the grace of
fresh starts

and **new beginnings**.

Remind me of your presence in the days to
come,
even when I feel pushed and rushed by
busyness.

Be glorified in my life this year.

Amen

heathercking.org

A New Year Prayer!

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for this New Year and for your great Mercy which is always ready to give me a fresh start. That is what I want, a new beginning. An opportunity to become a better person every day.

Lord, you make all things new and I ask you for your healing presence in my life in this coming year! I'm so happy to have the chance to start again. Thank you for carrying me through this past year and for always being by my side. I look forward to all the wonderful things you have in store for me ...

www.newwaytoday.net

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.

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.

Lose Your Tension

Tension is one of the worst of all depressants of the spirit. A prolonged, high-tempo pattern of thinking and living draws off energy, leaving the spirit exhausted and dull. Therefore, the mind needs to experience a depth of quietness in which tension will subside.

One of the most effective passages in producing such a state of mind is the statement that follows: **Be still, and know that I am God... Psalm 46:10**

In these words is a most effective technique of relaxation. "Be still", reduce your activity, stop your headlong rush, slow down. Do not walk or talk so fast; in fact, do not walk or talk at all! Sit still, be silent, let composure creep over you. You are agitated and therefore momentarily incapable of those creative and basic thoughts that can reorganize your activity.

Having attained an attitude of stillness, you will find the greatest of all thoughts will then come stealing into your mind. You are then ready to know that "I am God"—that is, you realize that you cannot do everything, that the world does not rest on your shoulders. The simple truth that you are to do your best and leave the rest to God comes back to your consciousness. Out of such self-treatment, your spirit will be lifted.

Receive God's Blessing

Our spirits rise when we learn how to receive the abundance of good things God wants to give to us. The secret is in two verses: **So, I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you. For everyone who ask receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10**

Note that the word ask is immediately followed by the word will be given; that directly after the word seek are the words you will find; and that quickly after the word knock is assurance that it will be opened. It is to emphasize that everyone who seek finds, and to all who knock the storehouse is opened.

Therefore, confidently ask. Then visualize yourself as now receiving; seek, then affirm that you have found; knock, then believe that God's storehouse is opened.

Practice receiving. Believe that you have been given. Then feel your spirits lift as you realize that God's blessings are actually showered upon you.

Be Rested and be Happy

Low-spirit trouble is traceable to lack of rest. To keep spirits high, one must find renewal and refreshment of body, mind and soul. Fatigue siphons off exuberance. Learn to sleep, for sleep is the great restorer.

I lay down and slept; I woke, for the Lord sustained me. Psalm 3:5

At the end of the day, simply lie down and go to sleep. Like a child, fall into a natural, restful slumber. Then awake—wide awake, eager and ready to meet the day. Tonight when you go to bed, repeat this passage. You will find restful sleep and awaken with your spirit lifted.

Refreshment of Spirit

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19

When the rain bring the miracle of earth's renewal, it is, indeed, a "time of refreshing." a similar process occurs in human life. By wrong thinking and misdeeds, the freshness of mind and soul fades. If we are spiritually changed, "times of refreshing" come from the presence of the Lord. How clean, fresh and delightful life then becomes!

“

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!

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNREASONABLE
AND SELF-CENTERED.

FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE KIND, PEOPLE MAY
ACCUSE YOU OF ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

BE KIND ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, YOU WILL WIN
SOME FALSE FRIENDS AND SOME TRUE ENEMIES

SUCCEED ANYWAY.

WHAT YOU SPEND YEARS BUILDING
SOMEONE CAN DESTROY OVERNIGHT

BUILD ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE HONEST,
PEOPLE MAY CHEAT YOU.

BE HONEST ANYWAY.

IF YOU FIND HAPPINESS,
PEOPLE MAY BE JEALOUS.

BE HAPPY ANYWAY.

THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY MAY
BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW.

DO GOOD ANYWAY.

GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU HAVE
AND IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH.

GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.

FOR YOU SEE, IN THE END,
IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.

**IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN
YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.**

-MOTHER THERESA



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

Understand Grace, Walk in Faith

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Ephesians 2:8

Most of us are aware that it is by grace that we are saved, but I wonder how many people truly understand the power of God's grace. Everything we receive from God must come by grace through faith. But all knowledge of faith must be built on a clear understanding of grace, because even faith comes to us by grace, as a gift. When you understand grace, you can walk in faith and receive God's blessings. God's grace isn't complicated or confusing. It is simple, and that's why many

people miss it. There is nothing more powerful than grace. Everything in the Bible, salvation, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, fellowship with God and all victory in our daily lives, is based on it. Without grace, we are nothing, we can do nothing. Today, don't just hear about grace, but understand that everything in our lives depends not on our merits or abilities or works, but on God's willingness to use His infinite power to meet our needs. This is grace. Focus on that truth today, and watch your faith grow.

Prayer Starter: God, I don't just want to hear about Your grace without grasping its real power. Help me to understand how wonderful Your grace is so that my faith in You can grow.

The Tremendous Power in the Name of Jesus

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, on things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

Many people, including Christians, don't have a clue about the tremendous power in the name of Jesus. Have you ever thought about the importance of a name? A person's name represents and personifies his character, setting him apart from everyone else. When we call someone by name, we are declaring something about that person. In the same way, when we say the name of Jesus, we are not just speaking a name. We are declaring a name that embodies power, not

human power, but all the power, but all the power and authority of God (see Colossians 2:9-10 AMP). When we speak that name, we are describing the Person. Jesus means "Savior," and we are calling Him according to what He does for us, He saves us from sin, from our failures and from circumstances that are not in His will (see Matthew 1:21). Many people want to experience spiritual power but they don't understand that in order to release it, they must speak the name of Jesus in faith. That wonderful name has been given to those who believe. As a child of God, speak His name in faith today.

Prayer Starter: Father God, over every circumstance in my life, I declare the name of Jesus in faith. Thank You for the saving power of Your Son

How to Fight the Good Fight

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

We are to "fight the good fight of faith" against the enemy—but what does that look like practically? Here are six key strategies: 1. Think aggressively. Plan and calculate, like a general preparing for battle, how to engage and defeat the enemy. 2. Pray fervently. Hebrews 4:16 instructs us to approach God's throne confidently. Step forward with confidence and tell Him what you need. 3. Speak fearlessly. First Peter 4:11 (AMP) says, "Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God." You and I are to have a

spiritually commanding voice against the forces of evil. 4. Give abundantly. The way we give is the way we receive (see Luke 6:38). Live a life of generosity. 5. Work intently. Whatever we put our hand to, we need to do it aggressively (see Ecclesiastes 9:10). Stir yourself up in the Holy Spirit and get the job done. 6. Love unconditionally. As children of God, we must love others as God loves us, unconditionally and sacrificially. Take these steps, and when the enemy comes, you'll be filled with God's power and unbeatable.

Prayer Starter: Lord, I don't want to sit back and miss the fight You've called me to. As I move forward, show me how to apply these six strategies in my fight against the enemy.

Increase Your Self-Acceptance

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. Philemon 1:6

You may not think highly of yourself, but God wants you to like who you are. Here are 5 practical tips to help increase your self-acceptance and improve your opinion of yourself: 1. Never speak negatively about yourself. The communication of your faith is made effectual by acknowledging every good thing in you through Christ Jesus, not by focusing on the wrong. 2. Avoid comparing yourself to others. Peter encountered this obstacle when he compared himself to another disciple. He said, "Lord, what about this man? Jesus

replied, If I want him to stay (survive, live) until I come, what is that to you?..." (John 21:21-22 AMP). We are not called to compare, only to comply. 3. Let God determine your worth. Remember that you have already been accepted by God. 4. Keep your flaws in perspective. It's ok to see where you want to improve, but make sure you appreciate your progress. 5. Discover the true source of confidence. If you place your confidence in God, you can't help but have a healthy attitude. Do your best, and leave the results to Him.

Prayer Starter: God, thank You for accepting me even when I have trouble accepting myself. Help me to acknowledge the good qualities You've given me and keep my flaws in perspective as I find my confidence in You.

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.



NEW IDENTITY IN JESUS

Today Scripture: **2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

**See what great love the Father has lavished on us.
1 John 3:1**

"I'm not who I once was. I'm a new person." those simple words from my son, spoken to students at a school assembly, describe the change God made in his life. Once addicted to heroin, Geoffrey previously saw himself through his sins and mistakes. But now he sees himself as a child of God.

The Bible encourages us with this promise: "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2Corinthians 5:17). No matter who we've been or what we've done in our past, when we trust Jesus for our salvation and receive the forgiveness offered through His cross, we become someone new. Since the garden of Eden, the guilt of our sins has separated us from God, but He has now "reconciled us to himself through Christ," "not counting" our sins against us (V. 18-19). We are His dearly loved children (1 John 3:1-2), washed clean and made new in the likeness of His son.

Jesus liberated us from sin and its dominating power and restores us into a new relationship with God—where we're free to no longer live for ourselves but "for him who died for [us] and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). On this New Year's Day, let's remember that His transforming love compels us to live with new identity and purpose. It helps us point others to our Savior, the One who can make them new people too! James Banks

What does it mean to you that a new beginning is possible with God? How can you live as His "new creation"?

Abba, Father, thank You for sending Your Son to save me.
Please send me to someone who needs You too.

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

INSIGHT

Second Corinthians 5:21 describes the very heart of the gospel message: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." In this great divine exchange, known as substitutionary or vicarious atonement, God took our sins and placed them on the sinless Christ and attributed His righteousness to us. Jesus took the full punishment that we deserved. The apostle Peter describes this exchange as "the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring [us] to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

When we believe that Jesus died for our sins, we take on His righteousness (Romans 3:22) and receive a right standing before God (See 4:3-4). Paul says of this gift: "Even greater is God's...gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ" (5:17 NLT) K.T. Sim

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Reprinted by Permission



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

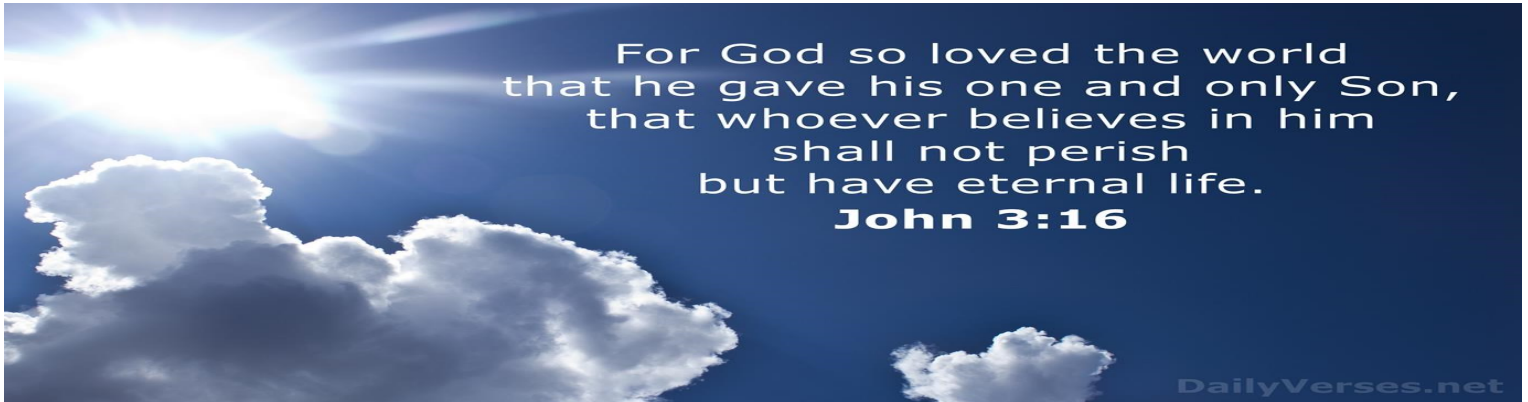
Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

Faith, Hope and Love

The best three-point formula for living is in this immortal statement:

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

Here are three powerful Spirit Lifters: Faith, the greatest power in this world; Hope, the attitude of expectancy—the best is yet to be; and Love, one of the greatest qualities of all—a heart full of compassion and understanding. Christian love gives deep joy. Let these three shine like stars in your life, and your spirit will be uplifted always.



WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is a time of prayer and penance, when Christ wants to lead us back to our baptismal promises of dying to sin and of living for God.

WHEN IS LENT?

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues until the afternoon of Holy Thursday. It runs for about 40 days.

WHY 40 DAYS? The "40 days" (not including Sundays) of fasting, prayer, and penitence before Easter reflect Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING LENT?

1. Turn away from our sins and turn back to God. Detach from habits and tendencies that are contrary to God's will. Lent is a time of conversion.
2. Open our hearts to our Father, so that we may live with Christ for God. Jesus is calling us to be people of praise and prayer, and living signs of his love for all.

"This time of fasting opens the gates of heaven to us. Let us welcome it and pray that when Easter comes we may share the joy of the risen Lord."

LENTEN RESPONSORY

Archdiocese of Toronto | www.archtoronto.org

Text from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Living Lent"

A Litany for Lent

FRANCISCAN MISSION SERVICES

We fast from judging others, but feast on patience.
 We fast from apparent differences, but feast on unity of all life.
 We fast from words that pollute, but feast on words that affirm.
 We fast from complaining, but feast on appreciation.
 We fast from bitterness and anger, but feast on forgiveness and mercy.
 We fast from discouragement, but feast on hope.
 We fast from suspicion, but feast on trust.
 We fast from idle gossip, but feast on purposeful silence.
 We fast from problems that overwhelm, but feast on prayer that strengthens.

Father, help me to see this holy season of Lent as a time of spiritual renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Motivate me to reach a new level of experiencing your grace.

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).

2023-2024

Vision: "Level-Up"

Gather - Connect - Go - Give

Bicentennial Anniversary
Celebrating 200 Years in Ministry

Spiritual Growth in Ministry, Giving and Health and Wellness on Purpose

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV),

It is truly a great blessing to serve as the new Pastor of the Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

As we journey together in this new season at Cross Street it is imperative that we seek to go to the next level in Christ.

God has truly blessed the Cross Street Church!!! We are celebrating 200 years in Ministry!!!

We truly have "Come this Far by Faith" and "We Are Not Tired Yet"!

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

We thank God for the legacy that Presiding Elder Moses L. Harvill and First Lady Eledia Harvill has blessed us with in the last thirty years.

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**!!!

Peace and Blessings!



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School**
(see Sunday Church School)
10:00 p.m. **Worship Service**
<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>
Meeting ID: 959 628 798
(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

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

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/562367770>
(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. &
6:00 P.M.
Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday Church School

8:00 a.m. – 08:45 a.m.
Adults

Call-in only: 978-990-5105
Code: 204730#
Sister Sylvia Pina / Brother Ken
Simmons

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 am
Children: ages 3-12:

In person, Fellowship Hall
Ms. Carolyn Smith / Rev. Grant.

3:00 pm—3:34 pm
Children: ages 9-12

Call-in: 929-205-6099, Code:
614890401#.

or
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401#>
Rev. Grant teacher

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

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

- Online: crosstreetamezion.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.crosstreetamezion.org/Give>)

Sanctuary Guidelines

There will be one service at 10:00 A.M. The doors will open at 9:45 A.M. to begin temperature check-in. As you enter the building, we request you to sanitize your hands.

If you choose to worship in the Sanctuary, there will be one entrance open, the main doors in the front of the building. The committee and I ask that you follow the guidelines for seating. The pews and floor will be marked to help you do this.

We also kindly request all persons attending to wear a mask over their mouth and nose to prevent the possible spread of illness to the most vulnerable among us. Masks are not required for those under the age of two or for persons unable to remove their masks.

I understand that there has been considerable discussion about masks. Since the scriptures are, of course, silent on the matter, I do not think we need to agree on the substance of the question. It is a matter of personal conscience. However, since some of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters would experience a great deal

of anxiety worshipping with a group of people who are not wearing masks, I ask that you consent to wear a mask for their sake (see 1 Corinthians 8-9 for the principle).

Worship Outside: If you prefer to worship outdoors, there will be designated parking and an outside speaker, and you can listen on radio frequency 89.3 F.M. and watch on your phone via zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. During Communion, someone will bring the sacrament to you.

Livestream Worship: Finally, we will continue to live-stream the 10:00 A.M. service so that you can watch from your home. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of a new illness, including fatigue, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, cough, or nausea, please make use of the live stream and consider contacting your healthcare provider.

Other Precautions:
Since studies seem inconclusive on whether singing increases the risk for viral spread, and since we want to

exercise an abundance of caution at this point in re-opening, if you choose to join the worship and praise team in singing, please keep on your mask.

Please refrain from shaking hands and embracing one another at this time.

I understand that some of these precautions may feel burdensome. They are temporary, and, even so, I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for bringing us back together again and ask him to provide us with patience and kindness for each other.

Much Love to All. Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Harvill

Special Note: For now, we will have service in the Sanctuary every other Sunday (First and 3rd) and 2nd and fourth in the parking lot only, along with Live streaming.

Please let us know by phone call, letter, or email what else we can do to help you become comfortable returning to in-person worship.

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: crosstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: 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 Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **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), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



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
www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — See Page 31
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Robyn M Anderson
Pastor

Email: revrmanderson@gmail.com

The Rev. Moses L. Harvill,
Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor
Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor
Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson
- 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