

Prayer Week 2019

Praying for the Presence of God

2019 Prayer Week Guide

January 6–January 13

Bethlehem Baptist Church

Praying for the Presence of God

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”

—Revelation 21:3

From beginning to end, the Bible says that God—our holy, infinite Creator—wants and will have unrivalled, intimate fellowship among us—finite and fallen though we are. Amazing!

Just as our first parents began by walking and talking with God in a custom-designed garden, so in a future eternal Paradise it will be God himself who “will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

In the meantime, the best reason our annual Christmas observances should be “merry” is that God’s people can joyfully join the shepherds in seeing what happened inside Bethlehem’s stable and celebrate with all the saints the arrival of *Immanuel* (God with us!), who came then to redeem us and will come again to reign with us.

God is with us! Prayer Week 2019 is going to explore the golden thread of God’s presence running through both the Old and New Testaments. The aim of these devotions is radical, intense, and pervasive: Bethlehem, let us embark together on a week-long journey up and into the places where the Almighty appeared. Let each day be given to prayerfully asking that the radiant light of this holy God, who mercifully draws near to us, would so shine in our hearts that we are compelled by his love to return it and to draw nearer to him ourselves in 2019!

Today on Our Opening Sunday

So, let's start, as in years past, this vital, mighty, merciful, indispensable, wonderful week with an overview of the days ahead. Unite with your pastors and leaders and with your family and friends in praying that this and each day's devotional lessons, petitions, songs, and prayers will get inside you at a heart-level—privately on your knees, together in your households and small groups, and all together at worship services and prayer gatherings with your campus..

Here's where our triune God may make himself present to you and to us in the next days of personal and public reading, meditating, singing, and praying to him:

- **Sunday:** To Adam & Eve – “And God blessed them. ... He drove out the man” (Genesis 1:28; 3:24).
- **Monday:** To Abraham – “I will make of you a great nation” (Genesis 12:1–3).
- **Tuesday:** To Moses – “I will take you to be my people” (Exodus 6:7).
- **Wednesday:** To David – “The LORD will make you a house” (2 Samuel 7:11–16).
- **Thursday:** To Isaiah – “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne” (Isaiah 6:1).
- **Friday:** To Peter, James, and John – “And he was transfigured before them” (Mark 9:2).
- **Saturday:** To John – “Then I turned to see ... one like a son of man” (Revelation 1:12–13).
- **Sunday:** To everyone – “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

As in the past, your prayer booklet is a special edition, tailored for your campus. In the back, pp. 38–41, find those campus-specific prayer requests that your ministry leaders have highlighted. Your campus pastor and staff have put on display some of their deepest longings and goals as they anticipate the year ahead.

Added Gatherings and Suggested Reading

If Prayer Week prayer gatherings are scheduled on your campus, how good it will be if you can go to at least one and make it possible for others in your house to get to one as well. Finally, consider a stop at the Bethlehem Bookstore for a discounted copy of a profitably readable little book Pastor Jason Meyer recommends to help us pray more and pray better, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* by John Onwuchekwa.

David Livingston

Pastor for Global Outreach Member Care

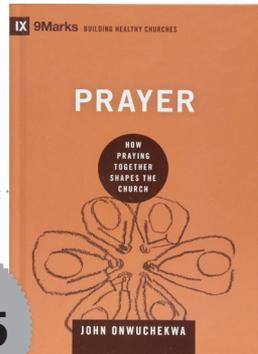
PRAYER WEEK FEATURED BOOK

Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church by John Onwuchekwa

Available at the Bethlehem Bookstore through January 13.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all prayers are taken from The Valley of Vision, published by The Banner of Truth Trust, 2017. This title is also available in the Bethlehem Bookstore.

ONLY
\$9.75
(35% OFF)



Prayer Week Schedule

DAY 1 SUNDAY, JANUARY 6

Pre-Service Prayer

D 6:45–7:15am **N** 8:15–8:45am

Sunday Morning Prayer

S 8:15–8:45am (Conference Room)

DAY 2 MONDAY, JANUARY 7

Prayer Week Morning Prayer

D 7–7:30am

Prayer Week Noon Prayer

S Noon–12:45pm (Conference Room)

DAY 3 TUESDAY, JANUARY 8

Prayer Week Morning Prayer

D 7–7:30am

DAY 4 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

Prayer Week Morning Prayer

D 7–7:30am

Prayer Week Noon Prayer

S Noon–12:45pm (Conference Room)

DAY 5 THURSDAY, JANUARY 10

Prayer Week Morning Prayer

D 7–7:30am

DAY 6 FRIDAY, JANUARY 11

All-Church Early Morning Prayer

D 6:30–7am

Prayer Week Morning Prayer

D 7–7:30am

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

N 7–9pm

‘Draw Near’ Prayer & Worship

N 7–9pm (Chapel D504)

Prayer Week Noon Prayer

S Noon–12:45pm (Conference Room)

DAY 7 SATURDAY, JANUARY 12

DAY 8 SUNDAY, JANUARY 13

Pre-Service Prayer

D 6:45–7:15am **N** 8:15–8:45am

Sunday Morning Prayer

S 8:15–8:45am (Conference Room)

All prayer times will be held in your campus Prayer Room, unless otherwise indicated.

D Downtown Campus, 720 13th Ave S, Minneapolis

N North Campus, 5151 Program Ave, Mounds View

S South Campus, 20700 Kenrick Ave, Lakeville



Sunday, Day 1

To Adam & Eve: ‘God blessed them. ... He drove out the man’ (Genesis 1:28; 3:24).

As we start the week, read the judgments of God on our first parents in Genesis 3:16–24. They are devastating! Yet they are not final. Even in the midst of the required curse and punishment, there is unmerited grace and mercy.

- The ground is cursed with thorns and thistles (v. 18); nevertheless, “You shall eat the plants of the field. ... You shall eat bread” (vv. 18–19).
- Adam & Eve became aware of their nakedness and go into hiding (vv. 7–8); nevertheless, “the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (v. 21).
- Though the pain of childbirth will be overwhelmingly “multiplied,” still to the woman God says, “You shall bring forth children” (v. 16).
- And most hopeful of all, the painful grace of childbirth hints that one of Eve’s “offspring” will destroy the Serpent (v. 15).

God’s desire to be with us has always been his choice alone. He made it before the world began, and even after the rebellion of our sin in the Garden, he did not reverse that eternal resolve.

After Eden, God draws near by keeping a safe distance from us—safe for us because he’s protecting us from his own perfect

righteousness. Yet he continues relentlessly coming from that distance, past divinely imposed lethal barriers, through one advocate after another ... preparing humanity for the fullness of time when he would come in the person of the final, flawless Go-Between, the great Mediator Christ Jesus.

Prayer

*I have acted as if I hated thee, although thou art love itself;
have contrived to tempt thee to the uttermost,
to wear out thy patience;
have lived evilly in word and action.*

Had I been a prince

I would long ago have crushed such a rebel;

Had I been a father

I would long since that rejected my child.

O, thou Father of my spirit,

thou king of my life,

cast me not into destruction,

drive me not from thy presence.

From "The Cry of a Convicted Sinner," p. 38, *The Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"All I Have Is Christ" by Jordan Kaufflin

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

2

Monday, Day 2

To Abraham: 'I will make of you a great nation' (Genesis 12:1–3).

*And **I will** make of you a great nation, and **I will** bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **I will** bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you **I will** curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.—Genesis 12:2–3*

What God gave as a command to Adam & Eve in Genesis 1:28—namely, to multiply into a people and have dominion over a place where God could commune with them—God cut short with judgmental curses because of Adam's rebellion. But Genesis 12–24 marks a new and better way, a redeeming way, by which God will realize his plans with humanity. He will with Abraham take upon himself the fulfillment of commands he at first had given to Adam. God promises to accomplish for him and his offspring what is required so that he may live among them.

In just two sentences, God said, "I will" four times to Abraham (see them noted above): "I will ... I will ... I will ... I will!" Make no mistake as to the necessity of God being so actively gracious. Without the delivering power of God, Abraham would have failed as miserably as Adam.

See the shortcomings of this patriarch who was nevertheless incredibly grace-favored:

- Not once, but twice, Abraham lied by saying Sarah was his sister instead of his wife, seeking to protect and enrich himself (Genesis 12:10–20, 20:–7).
- He schemed with Sarah to get what God had promised, a physical heir, doing so by his impregnating his wife’s servant to gain a son (Genesis 16:1–3).
- He then weakly sided with his wife when the inevitable jealousies erupted between the women, permitting Sarah to treat her so harshly that the pregnant woman fled (Genesis 16:4–6).
- After Isaac’s miraculous birth, Abraham capitulated to Sarah’s command that Hagar and her teenage son, Ishmael, be cast out, and he turned them into the wilderness with nothing but some bread and a skin of water (Genesis 21:8–14).

So perish any notion that Abraham was a hero, deserving of God’s favor. Yet, we also see that “Abraham believed God ... and he was called a friend of God” (James 2:23).

- When God commanded the 75-year-old man, “Go from your country and kindred and your father’s house to a land I will show you,” he went (Genesis 12:1).
- When he learned that his nephew Lot had become a war-captive, he rallied his 318 trained men and rescued him from five enemy kings (Genesis 14:13–16).
- When promised in his old age that he and Sarah would have a son, he “did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body as good as dead ... or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised” (Romans 4:19–21).

- And perhaps most astounding of all, when he was tested, Abraham “offered up Isaac ... of whom it was said, ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back” (Hebrews 11:17–19, cf. Genesis 22:1–14).

We see God’s committed and confidential friendship with Abraham in Genesis 18:16–33. On the way to destroying the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord says,

Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised.—Genesis 18:17–19

Thereafter follows one of the greatest, boldest intercessions in the Bible, tipping the scales of God’s justice and mercy ever more mercifully toward the sparing of the wicked city of Sodom if only 50, then 45, then 30, then 20, and finally a mere 10 righteous persons can be found there. Pleading from the humility of the dust, and fully conscious he’s tempting God’s anger, Abraham knowingly still dares his God: “Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be it from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” (Genesis 18:25–26).

Today, make use of your intercessory access to God on behalf of lost people, cities, and nations. As Abraham’s children, ours is the same privilege of friendship with God because he has chosen us for an ever-growing relationship with himself.

3

Tuesday, Day 3

To Moses: ‘I will take you to be my people’
(Exodus 6:7).

If God’s presence with Abraham began with a bang, Moses’ started at a burning bush! Of course, God had previously seen to it that this now grown-up “baby in the bulrushes” enjoyed a charmed life from the very beginning—but picture the dramatic introduction Moses experienced years later. Likewise, observe how this scene is thick with the themes we’ve already covered.

And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.—Exodus 3:2–6

God’s heaven-sent Mediator prepares to commission his people’s most prominent earthly one. Of course, there were other go-betweens, but none more famous than Moses. Nor is there any clearer, fuller Old Testament expression of our salvation in Christ today than what unfolded in the next 40 years of Moses’ life—leading Israel out of Egyptian captivity, through their wilderness wandering, and up to the border of the Promised Land.

Our own inborn fear of God, demonstrated by and inherited from guilty Adam, came immediately to Moses the instant he realized God was present, speaking to him through his “messenger” or “angel.” The fire that attracted Moses’ curiosity was itself a way God revealed himself even before he spoke. Think of the valuable properties of fire. For instance, think how God was present as a guiding and protective “pillar of fire” in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21). More probably, however, we should look back to another angel, the one with a flaming sword in Genesis 3:24, stationed to guard the tree of life and prevent re-entry into the Garden. Think of God’s holiness and his anger at sin, specifically hot enough to consume Israel for worshipping a golden calf (Exodus 32:10).*

The command “Do not come near” (Exodus 3:5) was temporary, as God never ultimately forbids us to approach him. But Moses wasn’t yet ready. He was yet ignorant of God’s identity as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 6), who had not forgotten the threefold promises made to them long before—that they would be his people, living in his place and enjoying his own presence in their midst. Acting as God’s human representative, as Adam and Abraham each were supposed to before him, the now cowardly, stammering Moses was not allowed to avoid devoting the rest of his life to the realization of these mighty blessings. God will have his way with his own—with whomever he calls and chooses.

Although captive Israel was just as reluctant to follow their God as Moses was—and as we often are—listen to his voice, speaking to them as well as to us:

*Say therefore to the people of Israel, “I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. **I will take you to be my people**, and I will be your God, and you shall know that **I am the LORD your God**, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into **the land** that I swore to give to*

*“Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything the LORD your God has forbidden you. *For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God*” (Deuteronomy 4:23–24).

Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”—Exodus 6:6–8

In closing, read the apostle Paul’s sober exhortation about responding to God’s presence with us today based on his presence with Israel in Moses’ day:

*Now these things took place as examples for us, that **we might not desire evil** as they did. **Do not be idolaters** as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” **We must not indulge in sexual immorality** as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **We must not put Christ to the test**, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **nor grumble**, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands **take heed lest he fall**. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.—1 Corinthians 10:6–13*

Prayer

*I bless thee for the everlasting covenant,
 for the appointment of a mediator:
I rejoice that he failed not, nor was discouraged,
 But accomplished the work thou gavest him to do;
 And said on the cross, “It is finished.”
I exult in the thought that
 Thy justice is satisfied,
 Thy truth established,
 Thy law magnified,
 And a foundation laid for my hope.
I look to a present and personal interest in Christ and say,
 Surely he has borne my griefs,
 carried my sorrows,
 Won my peace,
 healed my soul.*

*Justified by his blood I am saved by his life,
Glorying in his cross I bow to his scepter,
Having his Spirit I possess his mind.*

*Lord, grant that my religion may not be occasional and partial,
But universal, influential, effective,
And may I always continue in thy words as well as thy works,
So that I may reach my end in peace.*

From "The Mediator," p. 40, *Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"
(Page 78 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

4

Wednesday, Day 4

To David, ‘The LORD will make you a house’
(2 Samuel 7:11–16).

Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ... I will raise up from your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to a son. ... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.—2 Samuel 7:11–16

God’s promised presence with David began no less dramatically than with Abraham or Moses—when Samuel, now an old man and the last of God’s judges in Israel, obeyed God’s command to “Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons” (1 Samuel 16:1).

Once Samuel arrived,

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. ... Then, Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.—1 Samuel 16:10–13

Celebrate this Spirit-anointed psalm singer, who will be king, as he ...

- Shouted down and then brought down the giant Goliath, running at him in the name of the Lord of hosts, testifying “that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into my hand “ (1 Samuel 17:46–47).
- Ascended nearly overnight to command Israel’s armies, having “success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him ... [and] all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them” (1 Samuel 18:12, 14).
- Time and time again escaped the jealous treachery of Saul, instead returning good for evil by sparing the murderous king’s life (1 Samuel 24:5–7, 26:9–12).
- Grieved sincerely at Saul’s and Jonathan’s death and tried to honor their surviving bloodline; he even went so far as to praise honorable Israelites who forcibly opposed his kingship and avenge any who were wrongfully killed (see 2 Samuel 3:26–39, esp. v. 36).
- United the divided household of Israel and Judah under his kingship, conquered and built up Jerusalem, joyfully brought up the ark of the covenant into his royal city, and made preparations for constructing a permanent meeting place for God and his people, all the while becoming “greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him” (2 Samuel 5:10).

Look back at 2 Samuel 7:11–16, quoted at the top of today’s devotional. These words are God’s covenant with David. Here, at the pinnacle of David’s kingship, God promised that he himself would build David’s “house,” not as the physical temple David wanted to construct for God, but by raising up one of David’s descendants to establish an everlasting kingdom and to sit on David’s throne forever! In this covenant, God revealed both how he would gather a people to a place where he and they could reside together, and also who this descendant of David’s royal line would be.

But it was not David or his immediate sons! The sins of the father ran out of control in both him and them, and the subsequent kings moved the nation so far away from God's presence that God divided, conquered, and sent them away into exile!

So, in what way will God keep these promises to David? Who would this future Davidic son be, and where is this peaceful place where he will reign forever?

We see the promise that he will be a true divine-human Son of God (2 Samuel 7:14) and the king who rules forever (2 Samuel 7:16).

And where will he rule over and reside among them? God promised David ...

I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.—2 Samuel 7:10, 11

David's dream of building a house, a temple in which God's people can meet with him, will be built infinitely better in the person of Jesus, David's greater Son. That physical temple which Solomon built should have served only as Israel's temporary national symbol, pointing her forward to the permanent, indestructible "temple." Jesus said in reference to his body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).

Brothers and sisters, come to the Son, promised to David, who became flesh and "tabernacled" among us. See his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Come, you spiritual descendants of the "house" of Abraham and David. God is still assembling his international household in Christ, making a name for himself through David's greater Son among all peoples to the praise of his own glorious grace!

Prayer of Zechariah

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his
people
and has raised up a horn of salvation
for us
in the house of his servant David.
As he spoke by the mouth of his holy
prophets from of old,
that we should be saved from our
enemies
and from the hand of those who
hate us;
to show the mercy promised to our
fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our father
Abraham, to grant to us
that we, being delivered from the
hand of our enemies
might serve him without fear
in holiness and righteousness before
him all our days.—Luke 1:68–75*

Suggested Hymn

“The Church’s One Foundation”
(Page 689 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

5 Thursday, Day 5

To Isaiah: 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne'
(Isaiah 6:1).

Isaiah carried on the theme of God's presence 300 years after David and Solomon and 700 years before the birth of David's greater Son. He is specifically quoted more than a hundred times in the New Testament, so much so that his prophecy has been called "the Christian center of the Old Testament." He spoke to his own day and foresaw both the coming of Christ as well as the eternal age that will follow. (See the remarkable statement in John 12:41.) Isaiah was always a prophet pulled in two directions: On one hand, he pronounced God's departure and separation from his people, and on the other, he heralded God's gracious responses to his own righteous judgments.

During the first 39 chapters of his book, Isaiah was with God's people in Jerusalem where his calling was mostly to announce coming devastation. In the awesome presence of God in the temple (Isaiah 6:1-5) he was commissioned to ...

*Make the hearts of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.*—Isaiah 6:10

But one chapter later, he brought this hope-filled promise about the coming Messiah: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Then came this word to the nations:

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government
and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.—Isaiah 9:6–7*

And during the last 27 chapters of the book (Isaiah 40–66), Isaiah was with what was left of God’s Old Testament people exiled in Babylon. Though once again facing extinction for committing “cosmic treason,” they amazingly heard:

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand
double for all her sins.—Isaiah 40:1–2*

The most important of Isaiah’s prophecies came at this lowest point, reaffirming from hundreds of years before that God’s Son will be David’s royal descendant and, astonishingly, that though the greatest of kings, he will also be a Servant ... and a sacrifice through whom the Lord will save all his people from all their sins:

*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.—Isaiah 53:4–6*

Obviously, none of David's human sons could keep Jerusalem from exile, let alone bring salvation to the nations. The One to come must be divine and sinlessly holy. Thus, the promised Messiah must be a Davidic King ... the Suffering Servant ... God's atoning sacrifice ... and he must be Immanuel, "God with us"! This One will overcome the separation between God and man by becoming man and being with man.

It is significant that the Old Testament ends where it began, ending with the shattered people of God exiled from his presence by their sins, corporately repeating Adam & Eve's eviction from Eden at the start. Yet, as there were hints of hope for our first parents in a coming "seed of the woman," so in the gloom of the Babylonian captivity, Isaiah cried ...

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.—Isaiah 60:1–3*

Do you often pray with the same awareness of God's judgment and deliverance of which Isaiah spoke? Do you name and own your sins, even while claiming the pardoning gifts of repentance and faith in Immanuel's name?

Prayer: The Name of Jesus

*Thine honour is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
The guilty pardon,
The unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
Unsearchable riches for the needy,
Treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
Fullness for the empty.
At thy gracious call I hear, take, come, apply, receive his grace,
Not only submit to his mercy but acquiesce in it,
Not only glory in the cross but in him crucified and slain,
Not only joy in forgiveness but in the one through whom
atonement comes.
Thy blessings are as secure as they are glorious;
Thou hast provided for my safety and my prosperity,
And hast promised that I shall stand firm and grow stronger. ...
All this I have in thy Son Jesus; blessed be his name.*

From "The Name of Jesus," p. 21, *The Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"Crown Him With Many Crowns"
(Page 92 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

6

Friday, Day 6

To Peter, James, and John: ‘And he was transfigured before them’ (Mark 9:2).

And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son, listen to him.” And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.—Mark 9:2–8

Here’s a visual summary so far of our progress through the Bible of our Prayer Week theme, “The Presence of God”:

Adam & Eve > Abraham > Moses > David > Isaiah > _____

Given that Jesus took three disciples up on a high mountain, we could fill in the blank above with all their names; but Peter, as usual, spoke for the group, so he gets singled out today. And again, it was not a flattering spotlight for him to occupy, despite the special revelation being shown to him, along with James and John.

Cryptically, Jesus had just told a crowd that some of those hearing his voice would not die before seeing “the kingdom of God after it has come in power” (Mark 9:1). That’s what happened on the

Mount of Transfiguration. Peter and the others got a private showing, a “sneak preview,” of God’s kingdom on radiant display. Something momentarily spectacular happened to Jesus. All the rest of his 33 years of earthly ministry, Jesus’ divine identity was hidden behind his humanity. But there on that mountain, God revealed the exalted appearance of his Son, our Savior.

Peter saw what the Lord will look like when he comes back ... radiant, powerful, the shining King in the kingdom of his Father. As any of us would have been, he was terrified. Yet, despite not knowing what to say, Peter nevertheless opened his mouth and said something anyway. What came out was so absolutely wrong-headed that before even one more word could be uttered, a cloud signifying the presence of Jesus’ Father “overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is my beloved Son; listen to him’” (Mark 9:7). Why such a stern rebuke? What had Peter said that was so offensive?

What he’d seen, in addition to Jesus’ transformed appearance, was Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus. We’re not told how he recognized them, but he did. And dazzled and confused though he was, he blurted out two things that clearly seemed to him altogether appropriate:

1. “Rabbi, it is good that we are here” (Mark 9:5).

But, how much better to have been “slow to speak and quick to listen.” Instead, he interrupted a conversation any of us would have given almost anything to overhear, and that on a subject far more important than “being here.” Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus, according to Luke’s gospel account, about “his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31), that is, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven. They were talking about the most important thing Jesus descended from heaven to accomplish, but Peter wasn’t listening. Or worse, he was blind to and still refusing to accept that such a thing was going to happen to his master (see Mark 8:32–33). Then, Peter continued ...

2. “Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah” (Mark 9:5).

“Stop, Peter, not another word!” cuts off a thundering voice out of the cloud. “Don’t equate my Son with these other two, beloved and faithful though they have been. And don’t try putting any of them in tents anymore, especially my Son. The time for needing a tent or a tabernacle or a temple in which to worship is over. Jesus has come to you replacing all such physical structures, be they portable or permanent. The new meeting place of God with humanity is this Person. Listen to him!”

Peter sinned still more greatly against Jesus after this by his threefold denial of his master. But Jesus had foreseen it and would pray, die, and rise to reclaim his impulsive, reckless apostle, just as he keeps all whom the Father gives to him. Later, in writing his own second pastoral epistle, Peter rightly recollected his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16–21), telling us that, as great as it was to be an eyewitness to the majesty of God’s Son, you and I have the Scriptures, “to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (v. 19).

Pray, brothers and sisters, pray ... making sure to pray the promises of the Scriptures by which God provides you everything you need for life and godliness (vv. 3–4).

Prayer of Scriptural Convictions

*O God of Love,
I approach thee with encouragements derived from thy character,
For I am not left to feel after thee in the darkness of my nature,
Nor to worship thee as the unknown God.
I cannot find out thy perfections, but I know thou art good,
Ready to forgive, plenteous in mercy.
Thou has displayed thy wisdom, power, and goodness in all thy works,
And hast revealed thy will in the Scripture of truth.
Thou has cause it to be preserved, translated, published, multiplied,
So that all men may possess it and find thee in it.*

*Here I see thy greatness and thy grace,
 Thy pity and thy rectitude,
 Thy mercy and thy truth,
 Thy being and men's hearts;
 Through it thou hast magnified thy name,
 And favored mankind with the gospel.
 Have mercy on me,
 For I have ungratefully received thy benefits,
 Little improved my privileges,
 Made light of spiritual things,
 Disregarded thy messages,
 Contended with examples of the good,
 Rebukes of conscience,
 Admonitions of friends,
 Leadings of providence.
 I deserve that thy kingdom be taken from me.
 Lord, I confess my sin with feeling, lamentation, a broken heart,
 A contrite spirit, self-aborrence, self-condemnation, self-despair.
 Give me relief by Jesus my hope,
 Faith in his name of Savior,
 Forgiveness by his blood,
 Strength by his presence,
 Holiness by his Spirit
 And let me love thee with all my heart.*

From "Scripture Convictions," p. 190, *The Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"
 (Page 461 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

7 Saturday, Day 7

To John: ‘Then I turned to see ... one like a son of man’ (Revelation 1:12–13).

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches. ... Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man.—Revelation 1:10–13

As noted yesterday, John was with the others on the mountain 60 years earlier seeing Jesus transfigured. But by 95–96 A.D., the apostle was an old man, living in exile from seven of his greatly distressed actual churches in Asia Minor. John was about to experience a second sighting of his glorified Savior to pass along to these scattered flocks. They needed to know that their Lord was among them; indeed, that was the first thing John told them he saw—Jesus, “the son of man,” standing in the midst of the seven churches (“lampstands”).

As we enter 2019, nothing is different today for Bethlehem. Just as desperately, we need to know as individuals and as a church that our Lord is—right here and right now—with us. And we need not merely to know his presence in some intellectual, academic sense, but to so experience it that we become like the One our eyes of faith are seeing. As we begin today, pray that the Holy Spirit—who inspired and communed with John on that day 2,000 years ago—might change you from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18), as you supernaturally behold this “son of man” that John describes.

Consider what the appearance of the glorious/glorified Christ signifies.

- “Clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest” (Revelation 1:13): This is Old Testament high priestly language. John saw our final High Priest, whose life blood has such cleansing power that his once-for-all-time sacrifice of himself “has freed us from our sins” (v. 5). He who is present is our great High Priest.
- “The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow” (v. 14): Here is the wisdom and nobility that comes with age, the kind possessed by our everlasting Lord, who from eternity past has exercised the greatest mental powers and commanded the kind of respect that makes youths stand and long for the steadiness of such grace-filled age.
- “His eyes were like a flame of fire” (v. 14): Though ageless, nothing has clouded the Son’s eyesight. He sees everything that happens in all worlds, behind every façade, and into every heart and every church. “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him” (2 Chronicles 16:9).
- “His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace” (Revelation 1:15): Unlike the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream that were “partly of iron and partly of clay” (Daniel 2:33), Jesus’ feet are so strong they will crush Satan under them—the very promise God made to Adam & Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3:15).
- “His voice was like the roar of many waters” (Revelation 1:15): More than a dozen loud voices cry out for attention in the book of Revelation—mostly heavenly angels, but Jesus is the first to raise his voice here (Revelation 1:10), having already roared with authority to raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43) and cried with a loud voice both in agony and victory from his cross (Mark 15:34, 37).
- “In his right hand he held seven stars” (Revelation 1:16): The seven churches are here called “stars,” just as they were symbolized earlier as “lampstands” (vv. 12–13). God’s people are firmly in his Son’s grasp; we will never perish, and no one will snatch us away from him, as this “good shepherd” had already promised (John 10:27–28).

- “From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword” (Revelation 1:16): Near the end of what Jesus showed John to write, heaven was opened, a white horse emerged, and Jesus was its rider. He is named “Faithful and True,” (Revelation 19:11), “The Word of God” (v. 13), and “King of kings and Lord of lords” (v. 16). He’s wearing his priestly robe, dipped in blood, riding out to judge and make war, and “[from] his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (v. 15). With a Bible in our hands, we are holding Jesus’ two-edged blade (Hebrews 4:12–13).
- “And his face was like the sun shining in full strength” (Revelation 1:16): John had seen that shining face before, with Peter and James and Moses and Elijah on the mountain (cf. Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29). It doesn’t shine with reflected glory like the moon but as the source of glory like the sun. Jesus is not a human reflection of God. Jesus is God.

The overwhelming purpose for Jesus presenting himself to John and then to the churches was to give God’s people hope and energy. Not in themselves but in him. And not in him as an idea or at a distance but as our Lord who is here, right here, right now. Seeing him, fall as his feet like the apostle. And may you feel his right hand on you and hear him say ...

Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.—Revelation 1:17–18

Prayer to Jesus My Glory

*O LORD God,
 Thou hast commanded me to believe in Jesus;
 And I would flee to no other refuge,
 Wash in no other fountain,
 Build on no other foundation,*

*Receive from no other fullness,
Rest in no other relief ...
May I be equally convinced of the guilt and pollution of my sin,
Feel my need of a prince and savior,
Implore of him repentance as well as forgiveness,
Love holiness, and be pure in heart,
Have the mind of Jesus, and tread in his steps.
Let me not be at my own disposal,
But rejoice that I am under the care of one
Who is too wise to err,
Too kind to injure,
Too tender to crush.
May I scandalize none by my temper and conduct, but
Recommend and endear Christ to all around,
Bestow good on every one as circumstances permit,
And decline no opportunity of usefulness.
Grant that I may value my substance,
Not as a medium of luxury,
But as the means of my support and stewardship.
Help me to guide my affections with discretion,
To owe no man anything,
To be able to give to him that needeth,
To feel it my duty and pleasure to be merciful and forgiving,
To show to the world the likeness of Jesus.*

From "Jesus My Glory," p. 23, *The Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"Be Thou My Vision"

(Page 532 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

8

Sunday, Day 8

To Everyone: ‘For the Lord himself will descend from heaven’ (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Now we’ve arrived at the end of the beginning of the Bible’s story of “the presence of God” among us—God’s relentless resolve over thousands of years to have a people for his own possession and to give us a perfect place in which to live with him in joyful, holy fellowship. We can complete our timeline today:

Adam & Eve > Abraham > Moses > David > Isaiah > Peter > John > Everyone > Eternity

Each day of Prayer Week, we have looked at God’s next step in guiding human history toward two things that are essentially means to a third unspeakably great thing—the Lord’s ultimate goal, namely:

1. To choose a people for himself
2. To settle them in a special place
3. To be everlastingly present with them there in loving communion

“God works to create a people and a place for his presence. This means that all of Scripture is about the Lord’s redemptive mission centered on bringing the redeemed to a greater world covered by the presence of God.”*

**The Presence of God: Its Place in the Storyline of Scripture and the Story of Our Lives*, Ryan Lister (Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2015), p. 65. This volume is required reading for seminary students in the worship track at Bethlehem College & Seminary and has been wonderfully illuminating in preparing this year’s *Prayer Week Guide*.

- The **place** to which we are headed is a new world, foreshadowed by the Garden in Eden and Israel's Promised Land.
- The **people** are Abraham's spiritual descendants, as a nation and the Church as the international fellowship from every people, tribe, and language of the redeemed.
- The **presence** of God with us is Jesus, present with us by his Spirit, but absent from us physically since ascending into heaven 2,000 years ago.

On God's agenda for history is an unfinished task and a blessed event, both awaiting fulfillment. The task is for the Church to "disciple the nations," completing Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The blessed event is Jesus' return when the full number of God's chosen people is complete. The apostle Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians, written in about A.D. 50, aimed at resolving confusion in this infant church regarding the second coming of Jesus:

*We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so **we will always be with the Lord.***—1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

To unbelievers or even careless church people, this doesn't sound real and may perhaps even seem ridiculous and comical. Paul anticipated such indifference by writing,

[The] day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.—1 Thessalonians 5:2-4

Paul knew that in order to live differently than the world and differently than we have in the past, we have to have a different hope and a different goal in life.

We began Prayer Week nearly at the end of the Bible with the simple phrase, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man” (Revelation 21:3).

Hopefully, these pages have prompted you to look in two directions—joyfully back and eagerly ahead. We look back at all God has done to redeem a people into which we have been gathered and ahead to the promises yet to be realized: A garden-city filled with God’s presence, the Church complete as a Bride for her Husband, all former sin and sickness and sorrow passed away, the Lamb as the light in the city, the gates never closed and the nations bringing glory and honor to the King, the tree of life yielding its fruit for the healing of the nations, and Jesus promising, “Surely, I am coming soon.” (See Revelation 21:1–22:20.)

And now to the last blessing of this booklet from the Book of books to everyone: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Prayer for the New Year

*O LORD,
Length of days does not profit me
 except the days are passed in thy presence,
 in thy service, to thy glory.
Give me a grace that precedes, follows, guides, sustains,
 Sanctifies, aids every hour.
That I may not be one moment apart from thee,
 But may rely on thy Spirit to supply every thought,
 Speak every word,
 Direct every step,
 Prosper every work,
 Build up every mote of faith,
And give me a desire to show forth thy praise,
 Testify thy love,
 Advance thy kingdom.*

I launch my bark on the unknown waters of this year

With thee, O Father, as my harbor,

Thee, O Son, at my helm,

Thee, O Holy Spirit, filling my sails.

Guide me to heaven with my loins girt,

My lamps burning,

My ear open to thy calls,

My heart full of love,

My soul free.

Give me thy grace to sanctify me,

Thy comforts to cheer,

Thy wisdom to teach,

Thy right hand to guide,

Thy counsel to instruct,

Thy law to judge,

Thy presence to stabilize.

May thy fear be my awe,

Thy triumphs my joy.

From "New Year," p. 112 , *The Valley of Vision*.

Suggested Hymn

"It Is Well With My Soul"

(Page 519 in *The Worshiping Church* hymnal)

See song lyrics at bethlehem.church/PrayerWeekSongs

Downtown Campus Prayer Requests

Join us in praying during Prayer Week and throughout 2019.

DAY 1: SUNDAY

Downtown Campus Ministry / Pastor Ken Currie

Pray for ...

- The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1–11) to be on display as the congregation walks by faith.
- Each member to identify and use his/her gifts for the building up of the body and the spread of the gospel (1 Corinthians 12:12–21).
- The body to be unified and strong in gospel love (1 Corinthians 13).

Children's Ministry / Pastor Bud Burk

Pray ...

- That classroom team members', parents' and grandparents' hearts would continue to expand with God's love for Christ in them, as young eyes are watching and young ears are listening (John 17:26).
- That the Spirit would use the Dedication services, Sunday school, and other good means as drawing graces in young hearts—as they are being drawn to Jesus one step at a time (John 6:35).
- That God would establish every good word spoken and every good work done in parent support & equipping, making it helpful to minister hope and strength to parents at home (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17).

DAY 2: MONDAY

For the Staff / Joby Morgan

Pray ...

- That God will draw us to his word and to prayer day by day.
- That we would be united in purpose and direction in ministry, and that our affection for each other would continue to grow.
- For happy, holy personal lives.
- For joy in ministry and a strong love for the Bethlehem body.
- For a growing affection toward unbelievers and for the Lord to draw many into the Kingdom.

Campus Ministry / Pastor Paul Poteat

Pray ...

- That God would raise up men and women from our campuses to come on staff with Campus Outreach in order to multiply laborers.
- That CO would grow in diversity both with students involved and with staff we hire.

- For God to grant favor for students on each campus to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

DAY 3: TUESDAY

Small Group Ministry / Pastor Jared Wass

Pray that ...

- God will strengthen our current small group leaders, coaches, and elders for the good works he has prepared for them in leadership.
- People will grow in spiritual maturity through personal discipleship in small groups.
- Through our small groups the light of Christ would shine in our cities/neighborhoods in gospel word and deed.
- More men and women would be called to lead a small group so that more beachheads for community and mission would be formed throughout the Twin Cities.

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY

Youth Ministry / Pastoral Resident Richie Stark

Pray ...

- Praise the Lord that he is bringing many more students to our youth ministry!
- For wisdom to know how to best shepherd these students and nudge them to grow closer in their walk with Jesus.
- For students who are struggling with self-harm—that they would believe the gospel. Also that the Lord would equip them with the shield of faith so they do not believe the lies of the enemy.
- For students who are struggling with ADD/ADHD and that the Lord would grant us wisdom on how to best serve/shepherd these student to bring them to Christ.

DAY 5: THURSDAY

Seniors Ministry / Keith Anderson

Pray ...

- For our seniors, that even as their flesh is decaying, they set their minds on the things of the Spirit, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5).
- That our seniors take advantage of their age-bought wisdom and tell their grandchildren about their own walk with Jesus. “So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation” (Psalm 71:18).

- That our seniors would believe, “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation” (Psalm 91:14-16).

DAY 6: FRIDAY

Women’s Ministry / Samm Poteat

Please pray for the women of Bethlehem, that we would grow by God’s word, through life in his Body, and by Christ’s Spirit ...

- Personally in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- As a people of welcome and truth, shining as lights in our workplaces, families, and neighborhoods (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
- In our fellowship with one another, as each part works properly, building the body up in love (Ephesians 4:15-16)
- That the objectives above would be met through our Bible Studies, MOMS meetings, and Titus 2 groups
- For God to use the Women’s Spring Conference to “strengthen the core” for all the women who attend.

DAY 7: SATURDAY

Neighborhood Ministry / Pastor Mike Tong

Pray ...

- For our diaconal ministry, that God would bring more deacons to serve the Downtown Campus, that the deacons will flourish in their ministry, and that the needs of the body would be joyfully met.
- That God would grant the Jericho Road Team wisdom, knowledge, and joy as we serve folks who are having economic challenges—that God would use our sufferings to greatly minister to others.
- For our Bethlehem Somali Ministry Network, for our Somali and refugee neighbors to see the light of Christ and come to know him as the Savior of the World. Pray that more and more Bethlehem attendees would see Somalis around them and intentionally and warmly reach out and look for ways to develop relationships with these neighbors. Pray that Bethlehem attendees would regularly be praying for God’s Spirit to break loose and draw many of these hard-to-reach but much-loved-by-God people to himself.

Care & Counseling Ministry / Pastor Bryan Pickering

Pray ...

- That the staff and volunteers in the Care & Counseling Ministry would be refreshed by Jesus and consistently find refuge in the Lord in the midst of heavy work.
- That God would help us all (pastors, staff, members) continue to grow in our counseling competencies at Bethlehem.
- That God would help us reflect Jesus to those with whom we minister.
- That we would glorify God by loving people wisely and well in the midst of their struggles.

DAY 8: SUNDAY

Global Outreach / Pastor Todd Rasmuson

Pray for ...

- Our global partners, that they would feel God's presence as they are far from home, family, and familiarity.
- The unengaged peoples of the world, that God would use Bethlehem and other churches to come up with strategies so that they might experience God's presence.
- Our Global Outreach ministry efforts, that God would use us to keep his global purposes in front of every member of our church.
- Those in the Nurture Program, that God would equip them as they find their role in church-planting among the unreached.

Worship Ministry / Pastor Matthew Westerholm

Pray ...

- For the worship leaders, that they would continually be stirred with fresh realizations of God's truth and would choose songs and Scripture passages that lead the congregation to worship God in spirit and truth.
- That all worship ministry volunteers would come rested and ready to serve authentically, humbly, and wholeheartedly in pursuit of God.
- For effective planning and organization of corporate worship elements, choirs, ensembles, and special services.
- That the Holy Spirit would convict rebellious hearts of sin and stir the affections of every attendee to worship God wholeheartedly.
- That the Lord would grow the diversity of our church family and platform participants.

North Campus Prayer Requests

Join us in praying during Prayer Week and throughout 2019.

DAY 1: SUNDAY

Neighborhood Outreach and Welcome Team

Pray ...

- For gospel-befriending of unbelievers—that everyone would move toward an unbeliever with God’s friendship and steadfast love.
- That the gospel would be winsomely communicated in the context of these friendships.
- That this would result in salvation for many and that these stories would be told to God’s praise and our joy.
- That all those who visit the North Campus would receive a warm and happy welcome.

Worship

Pray ...

- For continued grace in shepherding the next generation of worship leaders through children’s choirs and instrumental ensembles.
- For week-in-week-out grace as we seek to point the people of the North Campus to the greatness of our God and savor the sweetness of the gospel together.
- Thank God for the plurality of leaders God has provided—staff and non-staff—including Kevin Shull, Mark Henderson, Becki Warnock, Shirley Nagel, Tim Stokes, Mary Lee, Dawn Onufrock, Connie Aiken, and Vicki Crabtree, among many.

DAY 2: MONDAY

Bethlehem Staff

Pray ...

- That God will draw us to his word and to prayer day by day.
- That we would be united in purpose and direction in ministry, and that our affection for each other would continue to grow.
- For happy, holy personal lives.
- For joy in ministry and a strong love for the Bethlehem body.
- For a growing affection toward unbelievers and for the Lord to draw many into the Kingdom.

DAY 3: TUESDAY

Counseling

Pray that ...

- Bethlehem would have a culture of vulnerability and transparency where it's the norm to admit our struggles, confess our weaknesses, and look to each other for help.
- God would “strengthen our core” by equipping every believer for one-another care and counsel.
- God would raise up a growing team of lay counselors who can provide clinically informed, compassionate, gospel-centered counseling for those in the flock facing deeper struggles.

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY

Children and Youth

Pray ...

- According to John 15:5 for three categories of people: 1) those who serve our children, 2) the children of Bethlehem, and 3) any children we reach out to.
- That they might know Jesus as the true Vine and would become like branches that receive their very life from Jesus. Pray that they would not rely on their own strength, apart from Jesus. Pray that they would abide in Jesus and bear much fruit for his glory, their joy, and the blessing of others.
- That according to the great mercy of God, students would be born again to a living hope.
- That they would be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner being to endure, trusting Christ despite the opposition.
- That they would personally know the love of Jesus Christ, experiencing a transforming relationship with him.
- That his name might be hallowed in their lives and through their witness in their spheres of influence.
- For the Middle School ministry, which has had many changes in the last few years (new leader, transition from Junior High, etc). Pray for hearts to value the change and for the change to bring glory to Christ who leads us.
- That the Middle School ministers would keep themselves in the love of God by building themselves up in their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit and waiting for the mercy of their Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life (Jude 20–21).

DAY 5: THURSDAY**Men and Women**

Pray that ...

- Women would flourish and grow as godly women, that men would flourish and grow as godly men, and that we would complement each other well in our discipleship.
- God would be our joy and strength as we teach and learn the Word together.
- God would provide strong and healthy mentoring relationships among men and women.
- We would grow in our love for the Lord and in our passion for reaching out with the gospel in the world around us.

DAY 6: FRIDAY**Small Groups**

Pray that ...

- The Spirit would prompt members of Bethlehem to follow through in getting into small group community life.
- The Spirit would stir up people to consider taking orientation for new small group leaders, and that they would start new small groups.
- Small groups would help elders care for the congregation.

Adult Discipleship

Pray that the Spirit would ...

- Enable the leadership of Bethlehem College & Seminary to accomplish the next round of accreditation.
- Guide us in revamping premarital counseling.
- Equip and motivate husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and that wives would respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:25, 33).
- Increase our joy in generosity, including tithing.
- Protect leaders from spiritual dangers.
- Fill all our members and produce fruit all over the place.
- Enable our members to be good citizens in a fallen world.

DAY 7: SATURDAY**Strtegic Short-Term Ministry**

Pray ...

- For solid team leaders for the 35 ministry trips scheduled in 2019.
- That God would bring the right teams together to bless our global partners and ministry partners.
- That those who go on trips would not only encourage our global partners, but that they would also come home with a stronger desire to walk with Jesus and have a heart for the nations.

DAY 8: SUNDAY**Global Outreach**

Pray for ...

- Our global partners, that they would feel God's presence as they are far from home, family, and familiarity, and that they would have fruitful ministries, solid family time, and thrive in their ministry this year.
- The unengaged peoples of the world, that God would use Bethlehem and other churches to come up with strategies so that they might experience God's presence.
- For Global Outreach ministry efforts, that God would use us to keep his global purposes in front of every member of our church and help us to shepherd our 115 global partner families well.
- Those in the Nurture Program, that God would equip them as they find their role in church-planting among the unreached.

South Campus Prayer Requests

Join us in praying during Prayer Week and throughout 2019.

DAY 1: SUNDAY

Corporate Worship

Pray for ...

- Grace to grow in our love for corporate worship.
- God to continue to be glorified in our services as we go hard after him together.
- The Spirit to empower us to live for Jesus as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19), sit under the ministry of the word (John 17:17), go to Jesus for help in prayer (Hebrews 4:16), and come to the Lord's Table together (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

DAY 2: MONDAY

Seniors Ministry / Keith Anderson

Pray for our Seniors ...

- That even as their flesh is decaying, they set their minds on the things of the Spirit, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5).
- To take advantage of their age-bought wisdom and tell their grandchildren about their own walk with Jesus. "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation" (Psalm 71:18).
- To believe, "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation" (Psalm 91:14-16).

DAY 3: TUESDAY**Youth Ministry**

Pray for ...

- Pastor Daniel Viezbicke and Justin Smith to be empowered by the Spirit as they pour their time and energy to our students in Grades 6–12.
- God to grant full assurance to believing youth as they continue to follow Christ.
- God to convict believing and unbelieving youth alike of indwelling and ongoing sin, and to save unbelieving students from the snare of the devil.

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY**Children's Ministry**

Pray for ...

- Children to come to know Christ as Lord and Treasure.
- Children's classes on Sundays and Wednesdays, that they would be fruitful for establishing relationships with others who worship Christ.
- The little ones in the nurseries to feel at peace and safe.
- Our teachers and caregivers, that they would feel the presences and pleasure of God as they pour into our children.

DAY 5: THURSDAY**Adult Ministries**

Pray for...

- Christ to continue to draw adults to himself in new and meaningful ways.
- An increase in our ability to winsomely minister to 20 & 30-somethings and to help them connect with the body to grow in the Lord.
- God to bless our Women's Bible Studies and special activities that meet weekly in our new building.
- God to move among the marriages at the South Campus in a supernatural way to stir up love and self-sacrificing care for one another.

DAY 6: FRIDAY

South Staff Team

Pray for...

- The staff, that they would be united—both in mind and spirit—in Christ.
- Pastor Dave Zuleger to receive wisdom from God to lead the South Campus according to his will.
- The work that happens behind the scenes to serve to exalt the supremacy of Christ in all things for the joy of all peoples.
- The Lord to meet the ministry needs of the South Campus, and that he would give wisdom for how to plan and prepare for the future.

DAY 7: SATURDAY

Outreach and Evangelism

Pray for...

- Boldness to enter into gospel conversations with friends, family, and loved ones who need to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Consistency in our prayers for the Spirit to open the eyes of unbelievers in our lives.
- Endurance to not grow weary of doing good in our community as a light for the good news of Jesus Christ.
- The ability to show hospitality to our friends and family as a gateway to fellowship and evangelism.

DAY 8: SUNDAY

Global Outreach

Pray for ...

- Our global partners, that they would feel God's presence as they are far from home, family, and familiarity.
- The unengaged peoples of the world, that God would use Bethlehem and other churches to come up with strategies so that they might experience God's presence.
- Our Global Outreach ministry efforts, that God would use us to keep his global purposes in front of every member of our church and help us to shepherd our 115 global partner families well.
- Those in the Nurture Program, that God would equip them as they find their role in church-planting among the unreached.

All Scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*.