

Some thoughts to start...

Engaging in the practice of faith is not always easy. For some people, sitting down and having an open, in-depth chat with God is not difficult. For many of us, however, it is.

What we're trying to do here is to give people a resource – to help them in their thinking about scripture, and in the practice of personal prayer.

Everything written here is simply a *suggestion*. If you find other practices more helpful, please use them!

Find a bible and head to a place you won't be disturbed. Take a few moments to sit quietly. In that quiet moment you might want to say to God, "What would you like me to hear today?"

Read each of the scriptures. Some people prefer to read silently, while others find it more helpful to read out loud. Take a few moments to reflect on what you've heard. (If you would like, the 'reflection' section is there to help start you off.)

Finally, take a few moments to talk with God. The printed prayer is there as a guide, but there may be other things you want to share. Chat, as openly and honestly as you can. Then, through the day, listen for God's response.

This resource was initiated by St. Andrew's Haney United Church, Maple Ridge, BC.

The suggested scripture readings are based on the Consultation on Common Text's *Daily Lectionary*.

If you'd like to share some thoughts about what you've read, head over to the 'chat space' at www.standrewsuc.com

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ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(July 23rd to 28th, 2007)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Amos 7.1-6
- Psalm 119.17-32
- Colossians 1.27-2.7

Reflection:

We have been journeying with Amos for about 10 days now. Today's short reading seems a bit as if God is threatening punishment, but the intercession of the prophet makes God relent. But if we read a little after this section, we see that finally God does not relent. We know from history that Amos prophesied several years before Israel was sacked by the Assyrians. He prophesied that Israel would suffer because of their sins. And suffer they eventually did. Amos, of course, understood this as punishment rather than simply the natural consequences of their behaviour.

When I look back at humanity's history of knowledge of impacts on Creation, I see many disasters very narrowly avoided, such as the hole in the ozone layer. I wonder whether we'll heed the prophets' calls in time, this time.

Prayer:

God,
may my deepening relationship with you give me always comfort enough to face the terrors of the consequences of our actions and inaction, and hope and strength enough to take action according to your Way.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace, with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Tuesday

Scripture:

- Amos 8.13-9.4
- Psalm 119.17-32
- 1 John 2.1-6

Reflection:

As a former ecologist, I remember reading article after article about strange droughts around the world, mostly in poorer regions, that were linked quite convincingly with global warming. I also remember reading article after article of predictions of further escalations of extreme weather events, and forecasts of the death tolls broken down by direct impacts, disease following impact, and economic collapse leading to starvation or mal-nutrition. Images of "the beautiful young women and the young men shall faint for thirst" (Am 8:13) are too real, even today.

The reading from 1 John 2 begs us to keep Christ's commandments. "Love YHWH your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbour as yourself" comes to mind from Luke. Could it be time to see God's Creation as neighbour as well?

Prayer:

God,
you call us to love our neighbour,
and our neighbour's children,
and their children's children.
Give us courage, strength, and passion
to follow your Way
and together turn the tide of the tragedy
we heap up for ourselves
but mostly for others.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace, with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Wednesday

Scripture:

- Amos 9.5-15
- Psalm 119.17-32
- John 6.41-51

Reflection:

Finally! A note of hope! Death and destruction will not be the final word! Oh, but we must wait generations for hope's flower to blossom. Or must we?

Whereas there is a sense in which we must wait generations for hope of a grander, earthly scale to blossom, there is also a sense in which, on a different scale, even in the midst of larger scale chaos, hope, resurrection, happens on a daily, weekly, yearly basis. God's not limited to one dimension or scale. Even in time.

I'm reminded of times of not following Christ's commandment of love, especially in terms of self-care. And I see the ripple effects that has on my family. It could, unchecked, lead my family to the chaos Amos prophesied. So far, thank God, I've always come to my senses in time.

What is God calling you to work on?

Prayer:

Help me to see the Easters you provide to me and your Creation in the here and now. Remind me of those in the Good Fridays of all the scales in which we live.

Today, I remember and pray for _____, friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Thursday

Scripture:

- Hosea 4.1-19
- Psalm 85
- Acts 1.15-20

Reflection:

Hosea, like Amos, prophesied against Israel (the northern kingdom). Hosea, however, came later, and was himself a northerner, unlike Amos.

As I read this part of Hosea, and the reading from Acts, I can not help but wonder, "What parts of my life are more like Peter (here portrayed positively), and what parts are more like Judas?"

"A people without understanding comes to ruin." (Hos 4:14).

It's easy for me to condemn policies of other governments, other denominations, other generations.

Do I have the courage and humility to truly understand my own life from other points of view? Where do I, like the Israelites, not perceive unintended consequences of my own actions?

Prayer:

Remind me of your grace, O God... for it is only deeply immersed in your loving grace-embrace that I can dare to admit my shortcomings without being overwhelmed into inaction by them.

Today, I remember and pray for _____, friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Friday

Scripture:

- Hosea 5.1-15
- Psalm 85
- Acts 2.22-36

Reflection:

As I read these texts, my mind wanders in two directions:

1) Where have I participated, unknowingly or otherwise, in crucifying God's Anointed One lately? God's creation. Innocent victims tens of thousands of kilometres away, suffering from my complacency in an instant-gratification, gluttonously consumption driven society. The person I honked at because I am too wrapped up in my own problems to care whether they have any of their own that may cause them to drive that way.

2) What more grace could we ask for??? We have a God who, rather than smiting us for doing wrong (though sometimes the consequences of our actions may feel that way!), God BEGS us (over and over again!) to turn around and come back into loving relationship! With God. With each other. With all God's Creation.

Prayer:

Thank you, God.
Thanks for caring.
Thanks for loving.
Thanks for forgiving.
Thanks for healing.
Thanks for renewing.
Me.
Others.
All Creation.

Today, I remember and pray for _____, friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Saturday

Scripture:

- Hosea 1.11-2.15
- Psalm 85
- Luke 8.22-25

Reflection:

In reading of Jesus stilling the storm, my heart is torn once more in two directions.

In one direction, my heart aches for those who read this passage so literally that they honestly believe God will not let the devastation of global warming predictions come true, at least for "Christian" countries. I know of not a single Christian older than 120 years, despite a lot of prayers for wellness and cures.

In the other direction, my heart rejoices that, in turning for help, Christ is able to still ME enough to see that with God, all things, including new and transformed life, are possible. Even if the storms outside still rage.

Prayer:

Still me, Holy One,
and place within my heart
the Peace of your Christ.
For I yearn to follow in his Way,
pouring out your love for all
you have brought into being,
though there will still be storms in my life.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love
In Christ's name I pray.