

## 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](http://www.standrewsuc.com)

### ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

22165 Dewdney Trunk Road  
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 3H7

Phone: 604.463.9611  
Email: [standrewshaneyuc@telus.net](mailto:standrewshaneyuc@telus.net)  
Web: [standrewsuc.com](http://standrewsuc.com)

### ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

## Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(May 28<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007)

WRITER FOR THIS WEEK:  
Mrs. Ann White, Minister  
Pitt Meadows United Church  
Pitt Meadows, BC

## Monday

### Scripture:

- Joel 2.18-29
- Psalm 48
- 1 Corinthians 2.1-11

### Reflection:

St. Paul has arrived in Corinth reeling from the disappointment and confidence sapping experiences he has undergone recently. He has had his work in three cities trashed by the religious powers, he has been unable to communicate his message to the folk of Athens. He is at rock bottom - his confidence swept away. The only thing that keeps him going is his belief in Jesus Christ. Paul sees God's ways as beyond his power to understand them. So he decides to stop relying on anything but God's grace to carry out his work. He will stick to what he knows best - Jesus death, resurrection, and the transformation it brings.

Have you faced those times at rock bottom? Have you had your work fall apart? Have you wondered just why it is all going wrong and what you are supposed to be doing? For me, those times have been ones of desolation, just like the land after the plague of locusts in the book of Joel. There is good news here if we can hear it. God knows what is happening and why it is happening. Best of all God walks through it with us. God's mystery may be beyond our power to understand, but God's presence is not. We can experience that presence through open hearts.

### Prayer:

Holy God, in the times of loneliness and lack of confidence in my life, I pray for your presence. Open my heart to feel you - near as my next breath. Sharpen my memory to remind me of your constant love for me. May I move through the successes and failures of life relying on your presence and love. 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:

- Ezekiel 1.14-25
- Psalm 48
- 1 Corinthians 2.12-16

### Reflection:

St. Paul is still relying on God for his confidence. As he looks around himself, he sees God at work in the world. This is something that he seeks and because of his experiences of God, he is able to see it.

In my studies for the Lay Pastoral ministry, one of the most important things to learn is Theological Reflection. It is finding God at work in the world around us, and we are asked to spend time looking for that work of God. Often, our insights come at the most unlikely times and places. It is my experience that God does that. It brings me to a stop and allows me to carry on refreshed. Paul tells us that it is because of our understanding of God, imperfect as that is, that we can begin to discern God's work in the world.

Where do you see God working today in your life? Where do you see God working in the world? How does that effect your understanding of God?

### Prayer:

Faithful and hard-working God, we look around ourselves and we find you at work in the most unlikely places. Thank you for those times when you break through our daily lives to show us your work in the world. May they continue to be times of refreshment and renewal for our souls.

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:

- Numbers 24.1-14
- Psalm 48
- Luke 1.26-38

### Reflection:

God speaks through two most unlikely characters. Balaam the sorcerer, and Mary the young unmarried woman. In the culture of the time, Mary had no status except that of the men in her life. She was the least likely person to be given a message from God. Balaam was a magician, a trickster who always put his own needs first. And yet God spoke through them.

Many times I have had folks tell me that they see God in me. And many times those encounters have taken place with people who do not appear to have any spiritual dimension to their lives. There was the hard drinking, swearing airman who spent most of his off time in the local bar. There was the woman who was so angry with how her life was going that she couldn't conceive of God's existence. Unlikely people in unlikely places. And still God has spoken through them.

Are you aware of and listening for God's voice in the unlikely people and places?

### Prayer:

Surprising God, who speaks in the most unlikely ways, may we be open today to hear you speak to us. May we remember your speaking through the sorcerer and the young woman. As we live out our faith today, open us to your word and calling on our lives.

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:

- Proverbs 3.13-18
- Psalm 8
- Ephesians 1.17-19

### Reflection:

What is wisdom? It is something very important to the writers of our scripture today. It is something that comes from God. It is a spiritual gift. It is more than knowledge, more than education, although these things add to it. It is an understanding that comes to us from having our hearts open to the promptings of God through the Holy Spirit.

Who has wisdom? I am surrounded by people who have wisdom. Some of them are my colleagues, supervisors and teachers. Some of them are the folks I spend my days with. When my own wisdom seems inadequate for the task before me, I trust these mentors to help me see things from God's perspective. Often they can present things to me in a new way that makes sense of my struggles.

Who do you identify with in your times of struggle? Whose wisdom do you find helps you to see things in a different light? Does it deepen your relationship with God?

### Prayer:

God of all wisdom, thank you for the work you are constantly doing in opening our hearts and minds to your wisdom. Thank you for those you surround us with who are for us people of wisdom. Help us, we pray, to be people of wisdom 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.

## Friday

### Scripture:

- Proverbs 3.19-26
- Psalm 8
- Ephesians 4.1-6

### Reflection:

Perhaps the United Church of Canada is one of the places where unity should be oozing out of our pores. Paul is keen to tell his readers that unity is a goal to be sought after. He also recognizes that it doesn't just happen without effort on the parts of those who work for it. There is one God, one faith one baptism, he says. And I agree with him. What I think is missing from this passage is the recognition that each one of us comes to faith, to God, in ways that are as individual as we are ourselves.

When I gather with my fellow students from all across Canada, there are many different expressions of our theology, and how that impacts on our lives and work. We are many, but all of us share the goal of becoming Lay Pastoral Ministers. We are united in love as each of us finds the way to express our faith. Do we have unity? Yes we do. Do we all go about our ministries the same way? No, we don't.

How do you feel when you meet someone whose ways of living their faith are different from yours? Does it make a difference to your relationship with that person?

### Prayer:

God of all, we think today of the many ways in which people worship you. We think of the many names by which we call you. And we are amazed at the variety. Help us, we pray in our maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

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:

- Proverbs 4.1-9
- Psalm 8
- Luke 2.41-52

### Reflection:

Those of us who are parents, or who have ever had responsibility for young people can relate wholeheartedly with Mary and Joseph's feelings when they discovered that the young Jesus was not in the group with them. When a child is not where he or she is supposed to be, the heart sinks, the panic begins, and all the awful things of the imagination seem reasonable. Mary and Joseph turned around immediately and began to retrace their steps. When they found Jesus, they expressed their love through anger, as many of us do. But there, the resemblance ends.

Something profound happened there in the temple with the teachers. Jesus' understanding amazed his listeners, and we are told he grew in wisdom and was obedient to his parents from then on. Was it being immersed in the presence of God without any distractions?

Was it a passing on of the teachers' wisdom? Did God speak of Jesus' mission to him? I don't know, but I do know that the beginning of wisdom for Jesus was this learning that took place in the temple. That learning could not have had such an effect on Jesus had his heart not been open to it.

How do you open your heart to the wisdom that is available to you?

### Prayer:

God of all wisdom and understanding, we come with open hearts to listen for your promptings. May we have confidence to recognize your voice when you speak to us. As our wisdom grows, may we remember to use it with humility and love.

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