

## 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)

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### ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

## Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Jeremiah 30:1-17
- Psalm 117
- Revelation 21:5-27

### Reflection:

Both Jeremiah and Revelation speak of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Jeremiah writes of healing the wounds of punishment as the exiles return from Babylon. Revelation tells of a city beyond human experience – with streets of pure gold – as transparent as glass. In this city there is no temple for there is no need. God is the temple.

Many of us struggle to return from exile, an exile into the wilderness of anger and defeat, from grief or loneliness.

We search for "home" in a place or in people or in work.

The essential similarity in Jeremiah and Revelation is that the new home – the glorious city – is not made by human hands alone, but by God's healing, God's grace and God's creativity. Revelation tells us Christ is the living lamp in that temple of God, lighting the world, making the impossible possible.

### Prayer:

Christ, my brother  
guide my steps to a new building  
a city of God where I can live.  
Out the wonder and awe of the life  
God offers to me.  
Give me strength for the journey  
water of life  
and your light to walk by.

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:

- Jeremiah 30:13-24
- Psalm 117
- Revelation 2:8-21

### Reflection:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last"... Jeremiah has told us that David will rule again, over the exiles. Revelation tells us that Jesus is the "root and descendent of David, the bright morning star". Revelation tells us that the "bride" is the new city of Jerusalem, and that the Spirit and the bride beckon us saying "let anyone who wishes take the water of life". Amidst the fearsome language of both books, the anger at wrong doing and wrong doers, the shame of defeat, the fear that we are not worthy of God's love, comes the repeated reassurance that God loves. God heals. God sends angels and prophets and finally Christ himself to call us to streams of new life. We are worthy, not because of what we have done or not done, but because we are God's creatures – the angel says to John "you are a fellow servant". God has much for us to do and much for us to be and offers us both the strength and the ability to do and be what we are called to.

### Prayer:

God of angels and prophets  
I beg you for the water of life.  
You have offered it before  
and I did not recognize it.  
I know you will offer it again  
and again  
and again.  
Grant me the grace of recognition  
To see your water,  
to recognize your angels  
to recognize 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.

## Wednesday

### Scripture:

- Jeremiah 31:1-6
- Psalm 117
- Luke 1:1-17

### Reflection:

In the time of exile, when Babylon has taken the people of Israel are taken into the wilderness, the words of God came to those in the barrenness. Jeremiah tells the people those who found grace in the wilderness, the Lord will come to them. Those who long for Israel, for home, shall find it once again. They shall celebrate, take tambourines and dance. "For I have loved you with an everlasting love".

Hundreds of years later, in the time of Roman conquest, when a woman and her husband live in barrenness, longing for a child, the word of God comes by an angel. Celebrate "you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice" at the birth of your son. Luke tells the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, of longing and laughter, and disbelief – and finally of celebration. In the barrenness it's so hard to see the time of celebration, hard even to believe it's coming. Harder to envision the form it might take. Yet it comes.

### Prayer:

God of the wilderness  
I cry to you from the barrens,  
longing for you,  
I search for reasons for hope  
in a universe of possibilities  
help me to see the reasons for celebration,  
for tambourines and dancing.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_,  
friends blessed by your love.

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

## Thursday

### Scripture:

- Daniel 9:15-19
- Psalm 122
- James 4:1-10

### Reflection:

"Peace be within your walls", says the psalm. For the sake of the house of the Lord, "peace be within you".

James sends instructions to the church, asking about the conflicts between them. What is it that keeps them from peace? "You want something and cannot have it", you covet something and cannot obtain it." James uses strong language to speak of the desires that master us. All the passages talk about the violence and destruction that result from following these desires.

What we all know, what Daniel knows, the psalmist knows, and the writer of James knows is that "it ain't easy".

Setting those desires aside isn't easy. Perhaps that's why we are so often told to set our eyes on Christ, and to draw near to God. Looking for God, we look beyond ourselves and the desires of the moment. In fact it is sometimes the only way to look past those desires.

### Prayer:

God of peace and vision  
for the sake of my family and friends  
for the sake of the community  
I care about  
let me look past my desire  
to the desire you have for me.  
Let the petty wants that lead me  
to frustration and anger  
pale when I look towards you.  
Give me peace within my heart  
and peace within the walls  
of my family and community.

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:

- Genesis 6:1-10
- Psalm 122
- Hebrews 11:1-7

### Reflection:

The bible is a wondrous work, retaining stories of faith and failure, flawed heroes and encounters with God and angels. It tells stories so ancient we puzzle over their origins and meanings. Genesis 6:1-6 is one of those stories. I have always liked this snippet of a mystery, like coming across only one page of an old letter. Yet the rest begins one of the greatest and terrible stories of evil, and anger and destruction. Ultimately it is a story of faith and salvation – the building of an ark to save the living creation.

Hebrews picks up the story of faith in a different way. "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things not visible." Today by science we know this to be true, that the energy that attracts all things into relationship, is the basis of all matter. 2000 years ago the writer of Hebrews knows that the underlying mystery of the making of worlds and human hearts is the presence of God calling us to relationship with God and each other. The faith of Enoch, Noah and Abraham opened mysteries of things unseen. Acting on this faith they changed the world.

### Prayer:

God of all that is seen and unseen,  
I sit washed around by the mysteries  
of creation.  
Your presence surrounds me.  
In faith I speak to you  
asking for understanding.  
In faith I speak to you  
asking to see the way.  
In faith I speak to you  
asking for faith, to act in ways  
that transform the world.

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

## Saturday

### Scripture:

- Genesis 6:11-22
- Psalm 122
- Matthew 24:1-22

### Reflection:

The stories today are of destruction. One writer has said, "If you read these stories and aren't disturbed, read them again." They are disturbing. The story of the flood, Jesus prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and the diaspora are tragic stories.

Yet Noah's story of flood is itself like the water that floats the story of salvation. Like the ark itself, Noah's story tells of new chances and new possibilities. Matthew's tale of destruction is the background to our own history. The chosen people were not destroyed, though dispersed and their temple torn down. And we are the inheritors of Matthew's story, despite destruction and persecution, we retell Christ's story 2 millennia later. We read these stories of destruction, literally on the eve of Advent. There are no lack of signs of apocalypse in our world, yet we read these tales of ancient apocalypse and see that each time as destruction loomed there was a way to the future. We read the warnings to turn away from destruction as we prepare for the coming of salvation. In the deep darkness of a Canadian winter – we turn towards the light, shining across time and space and distance.

### Prayer:

Come Lord Jesus. Come.  
Call me from visions of destruction  
and fears of chaos to hope and wonder.  
Let me be an agent of salvation,  
a oarsman on the ark,  
a lantern carrier to the stable.  
Show me what adventure you have for me.

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.