

## 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 and their minister, the Rev. Richard Bott.**

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

ST. ANDREW'S HANEY  
UNITED CHURCH

## Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(December 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Isaiah 29.17-24
- Psalm 42
- Acts 5.12-16

### Reflection:

Over these past weeks of Advent, the darkness has gradually given way to the light. Three lights now burn in our Advent wreaths and the light of Isaiah's promise is almost within reach. The anticipation of the celebration of the birth of Jesus is both energizing and, depending on the age of your inner spirit, seemingly endless!! When it comes to those last few days before Christmas, we're all small children at heart. We can't wait for the big moment. We can identify with the deer's thirst, however, what we are thirsting for is the joy of the star, guiding us to Bethlehem once again.

### Prayer:

God of Wonder, God of Light, as we begin this week, remind us often that the blessing of this waiting time is that we set our focus on your greatest gift – Jesus Christ. Bless our last days of Advent waiting, and bless our yearning after the Light that shows us the way – Jesus, whose birth we prepare to celebrate.

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 47.1-12
- Psalm 42
- Jude 17-25

### Reflection:

Ezekiel and the Psalmist speak of water, a symbol of life itself. Human beings need water in order to live. Human spirits need some basics to survive also – primarily hope. Jude's letter reminds us to focus on that hope and take it into every part of our lives. As we approach the birth of hope into our hearts and spirits, taking the form of a tiny infant, we are filled with the very grace of God. God's voice speaks in the cries of a newborn babe. How does your own soul translate the sounds of the baby in the manger?

### Prayer:

God, your voice reaches through time and speaks your message of love and grace to our thirsty souls. Help us to go out into this day as bearers of that love, ready to bring the good news of Bethlehem to all the world.

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:

- Zechariah 8.1-17
- Psalm 42
- Matthew 8.14-17, 28-34

### Reflection:

I love Zechariah's image of boys and girls playing on the streets of the city of God's greatest hope. This Advent season is all about children, so the image of children playing is such an appropriate one for today. Close your eyes for a moment and remember a time when you were a child, playing happily with other children. If you cannot remember any such times from your own childhood, God bless you; perhaps you can draw from the good times you wished for. Try to remember the sounds of laughter and imagination that accompanied your childhood play. These things are a source of great joy, both for us as human beings, and for our Creator whose greatest dream is for our joy.

### Prayer:

Creator God, we are all your children. Especially at this time of the year, we yearn for the carefree joy of childhood play. Set us free to lay down our worries and concerns for just awhile, and delight with us in a few moments of pure fun.

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:

- 2 Samuel 7.1-17
- Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19
- Galatians 3.23-29

### Reflection:

Our readings today are all filled with hopeful, peaceful images. Home. The light of God shining upon us. Diversity celebrated and honoured. As we quickly approach Christmas Eve and the celebration of the birth of Hope, these images may strike a familiar chord within you. You may want to reflect on which of these images brings you comfort and stirs warmth within your spirit. When has God's presence been so real for you that it was nearly palpable? There is a particular lightness to such moments, just as the psalmist proclaims. Take some time today to remember that God is with you still, shining the light of God's essence upon us all.

### Prayer:

God of Light and Love, shine upon us this day. Bless us as we encounter you in many ways today. Help us to see your love reflected in the people around us, and guide us as we seek to be your faithful bearers of love and compassion in the world.

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:

- 2 Samuel 7.18-22
- Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19
- Galatians 4.1-7

### Reflection:

The letter to the Galatians suggests that the people are ready to be heirs or inheritors of God's great gift of love. Have you ever received an inheritance or a gift that was held in trust for you until you were either old enough or prepared to accept it? Typically if a child receives a large inheritance, it is held in trust for them by (hopefully) someone who will hold it faithfully until they are ready to receive it. The epistle writer tells us that we are ready. God's great gift of love and grace is ours – we need only accept it. Do you feel ready?

### Prayer:

God of all blessing and goodness, prepare our hearts now for the gift of your grace and presence this day. Pour your Spirit upon us and stay near as we begin this new day, aware of the deep blessing of life itself.

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:

- Isaiah 33.17-22
- Luke 1.46b-55
- Revelation 22.6-7, 18-20

### Reflection:

Mary's song is one of courage and deep faith. She is essentially powerless in her culture as young woman with no husband and a baby on the way. She has every reason to be fearful, but instead she proclaims God's goodness and faithfulness to humanity. She understands that she is an important part of God's story and that it is through her that God will once and for all show God's love to creation. I think she is taking it all very well, all things considered! Perhaps we would all be well-served to have the confidence of Mary – to sing our own song of faith.

### Prayer:

Bless us as we make our way closer to the manger in Bethlehem, O God. Give us the confidence and faith of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who knew she was blessed by your great gift of love and transformation. Bless us this day, and every day, in the name of the One that Mary gratefully carried in her womb and brought to birth – Jesus, the Christ.

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.