



That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us ... And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. –1 John 1:1-2, 4

1 “Shared sorrow is half sorrow. Shared joy is doubled joy.” Whoever it was who created that quote revealed the heart of God. Although He is entirely and eternally self-sufficient, God loves to share. The community of the God-head loves living in relationship with others so much that He created a world and commanded us to fill it, so He could love every child of Man to be born.

When we sinned, we ran from God, but He pursued us, and His pursuit is the story of all time. God is love, and He will have a people for Himself—a people who, like Himself, share His love. The beauty of the Christmas story is that God revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ and that He reveals Himself to others through us. He shares with us the joy of the pursuit. Sharing God’s joy is what the apostle John was doing in His first letter. That’s what we do whenever we share Christ. That’s our mission as His Church—the very reason we exist.

The Christian faith is not wishful thinking. It’s not some wistful ideal we must hold to, whether or not it’s true or attainable. The rock on which we stand is God revealed in flesh through the person of Jesus Christ. John witnessed this fact of history, along with Peter, Matthew, Mark, James, and Jude. Paul met Christ personally. Luke interviewed a host of eyewitnesses so he could give an accurate account of God the Son, when He walked on earth.

The world strives to keep God at a safe distance, but He has labored through the ages to bring us close to Himself. That’s a fact. He sent His Son to be born a man, so He could be one of us and we could know Him. We just celebrated that joyful

fact. We rejected Him and put Him to death. That sad fact reveals an ugly truth about humanity that we desperately try to deny.

But John is eyewitness to the triumphant fact that Jesus rose and conquered sin and death. He is first in the long line of witnesses who share in God’s joyful labor of revealing the love of God in Christ Jesus. And that fact turns even sorrow into eternal rejoicing. Now that’s a fact worth sharing!

2 Prayer for Northpoint: We are called as a church to proclaim Christ, and we believe the message of the Gospel has power to save souls and transform lives. Ask God to move within our Body to seek God through prayer. Pray for faith that expects great things from God and leads us to attempt great things for Him, as we respond to His leading. Pray that our leaders will discern God’s will and that we will follow His call on us as a congregation.

Prayer for the United States: Our leadership is engaged in negotiations with Iran regarding the release of Pastor Saed Abidini and other people being held in prison for their Christian faith. Pray for the moral courage of our leaders to protect Christians abroad stand for religious freedom. Ask God to reveal Himself to our nation’s leaders and give them a concern for what matters to Him. Pray that principle will direct both our leaders and the citizens who elect them.

Prayer for the World: Pray that the political strife in South Sudan will not turn into tribal warfare. President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar, each from a different Sudanese tribe, have had a political falling out that is turning into a widening ethnic conflict, while Christian leaders in the region are calling for peace. Pray that the Church will be strong and wield influence on those who direct events in this brand new country. Pray that they will teach and model how to let principle rather than passion rule in the lives of the leaders and members of each ethnic tribe, so that peace will reign and the Gospel can spread freely.

Prayer in Support of Ministry:

- **Ministry of the Word:** Pray that Pastor Sloan’s message on prayer today will set the spiritual direction for our church for the coming year. Ask God to move in our hearts to seek Christ through prayer.
- **Winter Camps:** Ask God to use these mountain gatherings to speak His life-changing truth into the lives of Northpoint’s elementary, junior high, and high school students.
- **Congregational Meeting:** Pray that wisdom and harmony will guide our church as we meet to vote in a new member and to discuss finances. Pray that God’s Spirit will direct our church.