



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

December 16, 2018

### The Third Sunday of Advent: Lord of All

*Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace. —Micah 5:1-5a*

I hate taking medicine. It makes me tired. So recently, after ten days of Cipro, anesthesia for a medical procedure, and prescription pain killers, a low-grade depression set in and made life a daily drag.

The malaise began to lift on my drive home, as rain clouds parted, revealing the snow-capped mountains. But this time their majesty took on a darker dimension. Once again the parting clouds framed their immense beauty, but deep shadows brooded in the steep valleys and ominous creases. A forbidding quality in their beauty revealed just how inaccessible those impressive peaks really are.

I've taken some serious hikes in my day, but always along well-established trails. Seldom has nature overwhelmed me, even on 5,000-foot ascents. But those familiar peaks contain steep crags, and their fluffy snow chills to the bone. There's so much in that beauty that threatens life. God's world is so beautiful—but it's frightfully dangerous, forbidding, and overwhelming.

If God is light and in Him is no darkness, why did He create a world that was dark? Why were there darkness and light before sin ever came? How could the Lord of Life rule a world that incorporates death as an essential function? If the joy of the LORD is our strength, why is there depression?

There's war going on in a world created by the Prince of Peace, and we live in the middle of it. Actually, that war lives in the middle of us. Depression is a minor front in an epic conflict that darkens every day. Competition in the marketplace ruins careers and destroys hope. Conflict in the workplace lies just under the surface of smiling colleagues with malicious intentions. High-sounding ideals conceal vicious animosity.

"Our Father's world," contains whole peoples living in daily fear, some of drug lords others from terrorist ideologies. Others scrape out a living, utterly neglected, exploited by the powers that be. These institutional evils aren't confined to the past. They're with us today. It comforts us to think of them as far away. They're not. Something in the daily news tells us that the breakdown is encroaching on our tidy, carefully managed middle-class world—from within and without.

The reality of evil painfully reminds us that our world needs to be put right, but our race has no idea how to make it happen. Yet Christmas comes at the darkest time of year, and Advent reminds us of the pivotal moment in the story of our race—and the bedrock of our faith.

"He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love."

Isaac Watts' famous words remind us that God is good and He's in control. No event occurs apart from His direction. No experience escapes His control. No course of action strays from God's plan. He causes Satan himself to accomplish His will, and even Christ's betrayer fulfilled the Father's purpose.

Nearing full term, a virgin trudged 70-miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, traveling under compulsion—from the government to be taxed and from God, so her Baby would be born in Bethlehem as foretold. Death haunted her steps. When Herod learned of a rival king to be born, he had Bethlehem's young children torn from their mother's arms and slaughtered. Mary was spared that awful fate—until 30 years later.

God Himself took on flesh and succumbed to death and darkness. But that virgin mother bore the Light of the World—the One Perfect Child whose sacrifice subdued the darkness, overcame death and turned mourning into joy for all who trust in Him as Savior—and Lord of ALL. To the praise of God's glory.

## Prayer for Today

We bring the good news of God's sovereign control of all things. We can trust Him during times of depression. He shepherds His people through times of fire, flood, and loss. Nations collapse and rise by His design, and He leads even those who reject Him.

Ask God to use the dark events of our time to turn people to the light. Pray for ...

- the world to be convicted of sin and their need of forgiveness through Christ alone
- a hunger for righteousness and the knowledge that God alone is good
- a love for the One True God of Love, who came into the world at Christmas.

Pray for revival in the Church that ...

- moves us to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness first
- leads us to trust God for everything we need
- spread the truth that Jesus saves
- makes us love God with all of our heart and with all of our soul and with all of our strength

And pray for this revival to take effect at Northpoint, in the congregation as well as our leaders.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

## Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

*"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"*

*"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"*

*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

—Romans 11:33-36