
Cedar Springs Mission Devotionals & Prayer Guide

January 2018



<http://reclamationstories.org>

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

“We will be glad and rejoice in thee.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in thee. We will not open the gates of the year to the dolorous notes of the sackbut, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy, and the high-sounding cymbals of gladness. “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation.” We, the called and faithful and chosen, we will drive away our griefs, and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles, we who have the sweetening tree to cast into Marah’s bitter pool, with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which thou dwellest, will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. *We will*, we are resolved about it, Jesus must have the crown of our heart’s delight; we will not dishonour our Bridegroom by mourning in his presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies, let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. *We will be glad and rejoice*: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be camphor and spikenard, calamus and cinnamon even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? *We will be glad and rejoice* in Thee. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, aye, and every drop of their fullness in him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, thou art the present portion of thy people, favour us this year with such a sense of thy preciousness, that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in thee. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

We support a family that is serving at a sanatorium for chest diseases, focusing on bringing holistic healing for body and soul to the semi-nomadic people of the area by providing high quality healthcare for them. Our supported worker serves in the Mobile Dental Clinic that was donated to the [Annoor Sanatorium](#) to further the outreach and care to Bedouin in remote areas. The clinic is a great resource to meet the felt needs of the poor in places where it is hard or impossible to receive any kind of dental care. Pray today for more in-patients to come to the clinic in the coming months for healing of all sorts.

Reformed Bible Seminary Myanmar was begun by Dr. Tial Thanga and the Myanmar Reformed Theological Presbyterian Church. Carroll and Shirley Coakley serve as Associate Staff with Worldwide Development Association’s International Team and work closely with Dr. Thanga. Pray today for Dr. Thanga’s work in Myanmar.

Notes.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

“Let the people renew their strength.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Isaiah 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continueth by itself. “Thou renewest the face of the year,” was the Psalmist’s utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labour, must drink of the rain of heaven and suck from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap fresh drawn from the earth. Neither can man’s life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the waste of the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the waste of the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances. How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starvelings some saints are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration, we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strifes within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that hath not sucked up fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many intertwined roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and so, perhaps, a painful desolation, and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfilment of the promise, “They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.”
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Jeff and Ellen](#) work among unreached people groups in two restricted access countries of Southeast Asia catalyzing Church Planting Movements. Pray today for the TL church plants in Laos that need your earnest prayer support for continual evangelistic efforts, encouragement, growth, and joy and strength in standing against governmental and registered church pressure.

As a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America, [RUF](#) holds to the core beliefs of historic Christianity which motivate a heart for God and love for the university. CSPC supports RUF on two college campuses - UT Knoxville and Carson Newman. Pray today for the staff of RUF as they prepare to connect with students on both campuses this semester.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 3:4

The voice crying in the wilderness demanded *a way for the Lord, a way prepared, and a way prepared in the wilderness*. I would be attentive to the Master's proclamation, and give him a road into my heart, cast up by gracious operations, through the desert of my nature. The four directions in the text must have my serious attention.

Every valley must be exalted. Low and groveling thoughts of God must be given up; doubting and despairing must be removed; and self-seeking and carnal delights must be forsaken. Across these deep valleys a glorious causeway of grace must be raised.

Every mountain and hill shall be laid low. Proud creature-sufficiency, and boastful self-righteousness, must be levelled, to make a highway for the King of kings. Divine fellowship is never vouchsafed to haughty, high-minded sinners. The Lord hath respect unto the lowly, and visits the contrite in heart, but the lofty are an abomination unto him. My soul, beseech the Holy Spirit to set thee right in this respect.

The crooked shall be made straight. The wavering heart must have a straight path of decision for God and holiness marked out for it. Double-minded men are strangers to the God of truth. My soul, take heed that thou be in all things honest and true, as in the sight of the heart-searching God.

The rough places shall be made smooth. Stumbling-blocks of sin must be removed, and thorns and briers of rebellion must be uprooted. So great a visitor must not find miry ways and stony places when he comes to honour his favoured ones with his company. Oh that this evening the Lord may find in my heart a highway made ready by his grace, that he may make a triumphal progress through the utmost bounds of my soul, from the beginning of this year even to the end of it. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Sybil Baloyi](#) lives in Mozambique and runs a preschool for orphaned and vulnerable children. Pray today for registration to go well for an English class that will start next year so that more students can begin studying all their subjects in English.

[Safe Families for Children](#) is an innovative collaboration between area churches, volunteers and child care professionals designed to support at-risk children and parents in need. Pray today for Janet Cockrum and her leadership for this ministry. For more information, contact Janet at jcockrum@bethany.org.

Notes.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

“And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Genesis 42:8

This morning our desires went forth for growth in our acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; it may be well to-night to consider a kindred topic, namely, *our heavenly Joseph's knowledge of us*. This was most blessedly perfect long before we had the slightest knowledge of him. “His eyes beheld our substance, yet being imperfect, and in his book all our members were written, when as yet there was none of them.” Before we had a being in the world we had a being in his heart. When we were enemies to him, he knew us, our misery, our madness, and our wickedness. When we wept bitterly in despairing repentance, and viewed him only as a judge and a ruler, he viewed us as his brethren well beloved, and his bowels yearned towards us. He never mistook his chosen, but always beheld them as objects of his infinite affection. “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” is as true of the prodigals who are feeding swine as of the children who sit at the table.

But, alas! *we knew not our royal Brother*, and out of this ignorance grew a host of sins. We withheld our hearts from him, and allowed him no entrance to our love. We mistrusted him, and gave no credit to his words. We rebelled against him, and paid him no loving homage. The Sun of Righteousness shone forth, and we could not see him. Heaven came down to earth, and earth perceived it not. Let God be praised, those days are over with us; yet even now it is but little that we know of Jesus compared with what he knows of us. We have but begun to study him, but he knoweth us altogether. It is a blessed circumstance that the ignorance is not on his side, for then it would be a hopeless case for us. He will not say to us, “I never knew you,” but he will confess our names in the day of his appearing, and meanwhile will manifest himself to us as he doth not unto the world. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Ron and Amy Barber](#) are equipping the next generation of church planters. Their ministry at International Graduate School of Leadership (IGSL) in the Philippines prepares students for ministry in cross-cultural contexts around the world. Pray today that Ron and Amy would model a good husband-wife relationship to the many married students on campus as part of their preparation for cross-cultural ministry together.

[Samaritan Ministry](#) is a faith-based AIDS Service Organization led by Wayne Smith at Central Baptist Church of Bearden in Knoxville. They seek to serve people, primarily in East Tennessee, who are living with HIV/AIDS through direct support and by way of their significant network of service providers. Pray today for the staff of this ministry and the people they are serving.

Notes:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

“And God saw the light.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Genesis 1:4

This morning we noticed the goodness of the light, and the Lord's dividing it from the darkness, we now note the special eye which the Lord had for the light. "God saw the light" - he looked at it with complacency, gazed upon it with pleasure, saw that it "was good." If the Lord has given you light, dear reader, he looks on that light with peculiar interest; for not only is it dear to him as his own handiwork, but because it is like himself, for "He is light." Pleasant it is to the believer to know that God's eye is thus tenderly observant of that work of grace which he has begun. He never loses sight of the treasure which he has placed in our earthen vessels. Sometimes we cannot see the light, but God always sees the light, and that is much better than our seeing it. Better for the judge to see my innocence than for me to think I see it. It is very comfortable for me to know that I am one of God's people - but whether *I* know it or not, if the Lord knows it, I am still safe. This is the foundation, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." You may be sighing and groaning because of inbred sin, and mourning over your darkness, yet the Lord sees "light" in your heart, for he has put it there, and all the cloudiness and gloom of your soul cannot conceal your light from his gracious eye. You may have sunk low in despondency, and even despair; but if your soul has any longing towards Christ, and if you are seeking to rest in his finished work, God sees the "light." He not only *sees* it, but he also *preserves* it in you. "I, the Lord, do keep it." This is a precious thought to those who, after anxious watching and guarding of themselves, feel their own powerlessness to do so. The light thus preserved by his grace, he will one day develop into the splendour of noonday, and the fullness of glory. The light within is the dawn of the eternal day. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Phil](#) has been serving in Eurasia for over 10 years. His focus has been the Tatar people, a largely Muslim people group. Phil has worked with others in launching a local organization that provides language instruction with the goal of helping to equip believers to bring the light of the gospel to the least-reached in their own language. Pray today for further development of his organization's recent initiative to offer instruction by extension.

[The Cross Greek Christian Ministry](#) is unique to the University of Tennessee and focuses on the fraternity and sorority community. The ministry is student led, but guided by a staff. Pray today for the staff and student leaders with The Cross that they might reach students this semester who need to find a caring community.

Notes.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

“Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Ezekiel 33:22

In the way of *judgment* this may be the case, and, if so, be it mine to consider the reason of such a visitation, and bear the rod and him that hath appointed it. I am not the only one who is chastened in the night season; let me cheerfully submit to the affliction, and carefully endeavour to be profited thereby. But the hand of the Lord may also be felt in another manner, strengthening the soul and lifting the spirit upward towards eternal things. O that I may in this sense feel the Lord dealing with me! A sense of the divine presence and indwelling bears the soul towards heaven as upon the wings of eagles. At such times we are full to the brim with spiritual joy, and forget the cares and sorrows of earth; the invisible is near, and the visible loses its power over us; servant-body waits at the foot of the hill, and the master-spirit worships upon the summit in the presence of the Lord. O that a hallowed season of divine communion may be vouchsafed to me this evening! The Lord knows that I need it very greatly. My graces languish, my corruptions rage, my faith is weak, my devotion is cold; all these are reasons why his healing hand should be laid upon me. His hand can cool the heat of my burning brow, and stay the tumult of my palpitating heart. That glorious right hand which molded the world can new-create my mind; the unwearied hand which bears the earth's huge pillars up can sustain my spirit; the loving hand which encloses all the saints can cherish me; and the mighty hand which breaketh in pieces the enemy can subdue my sins. Why should I not feel that hand touching me this evening? Come, my soul, address thy God with the potent plea, that Jesus' hands were pierced for thy redemption, and thou shalt surely feel that same hand upon thee which once touched Daniel and set him upon his knees that he might see visions of God. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

T works with the SEED Company (an affiliate organization of Wycliffe Bible Translators) in their mission to promote and accelerate Bible translation by indigenous churches and organizations in their home countries. T watches over 12 translation projects that represent 35 languages, many of which are just receiving the first Scripture in their own language. Pray today for T's travels into and out of restricted countries that he may always appear "uninteresting" to immigration officials.

The Restoration House (TRH) is working to help restore single mothers and their children back to God's good intent for their lives. Through transformational housing, team mentoring, and service planning, TRH is helping single mother families end cycles of poverty and distress. Pray today for all the families that TRH is reaching.

Notes.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

“My sister, my spouse.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 4:12

Observe the sweet titles with which the heavenly Solomon with intense affection addresses his bride the church. *“My sister*, one near to me by ties of nature, partaker of the same sympathies. *My spouse*, nearest and dearest, united to me by the tenderest bands of love; my sweet companion, part of my own self. *My sister*, by my Incarnation, which makes me bone of thy bone and flesh of thy flesh; *my spouse*, by heavenly betrothal, in which I have espoused thee unto myself in righteousness. *My sister*, whom I knew of old, and over whom I watched from her earliest infancy; *my spouse*, taken from among the daughters, embraced by arms of love, and affianced unto me forever. See how true it is that our royal Kinsman is not ashamed of us, for he dwells with manifest delight upon this two-fold relationship. We have the word “my” twice in our version; as if Christ dwelt with rapture on his possession of his Church. “His delights were with the sons of men,” because those sons of men were his own chosen ones. He, the Shepherd, sought the sheep, because they were *his* sheep; he has gone about “to seek and to save that which was lost,” because that which was lost was *his* long before it was lost to itself or lost to him. The church is the exclusive portion of her Lord; none else may claim a partnership, or pretend to share her love. Jesus, thy church delights to have it so! Let every believing soul drink solace out of these wells. Soul! Christ is near to thee in ties of relationship; Christ is dear to thee in bonds of marriage union, and thou art dear to him; behold he grasps both of thy hands with both his own, saying, “*My sister, my spouse.*” Mark the two sacred holdfasts by which thy Lord gets such a double hold of thee that he neither can nor will ever let thee go. Be not, O beloved, slow to return the hallowed flame of his love. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

A and B are serving in a Creative Access country. Their family is building friendships and seeing them mature as A continues to teach at a local university and serve the teachers and students there. Pray today for success in the new programs that provide cross-cultural, team, and professional training for national university graduates before they go abroad.

The Thornston Educational Fund is an organization whose mission is to initiate and develop relationships with certain educational institutions that serve the needs of underprivileged individuals and families in Asia. Pray today for the organization's work and for the people who are served.

Notes:

MONDAY, JANUARY 8

“Thy love is better than wine.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 1:2

*Nothing gives the believer so much joy as fellowship with Christ. He has enjoyment as others have in the common mercies of life, he can be glad both in God's gifts and God's works; but in all these separately, yea, and in all of them added together, he doth not find such substantial delight as in the matchless person of his Lord Jesus. He has wine which no vineyard on earth ever yielded; he has bread which all the corn-fields of Egypt could never bring forth. Where can such sweetness be found as we have tasted in communion with our Beloved? In our esteem, the joys of earth are little better than husks for swine compared with Jesus, the heavenly manna. We would rather have one mouthful of Christ's love, and a sip of his fellowship, than a whole world full of carnal delights. What is the chaff to the wheat? What is the sparkling paste to the true diamond? What is a dream to the glorious reality? What is time's mirth, in its best trim, compared to our Lord Jesus in his most despised estate? If you know anything of the inner life, you will confess that our highest, purest, and most enduring joys must be the fruit of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. No spring yields such sweet water as that well of God which was digged with the soldier's spear. All earthly bliss is of the earth earthy, but the comforts of Christ's presence are like himself, heavenly. We can review our communion with Jesus, and find no regrets of emptiness therein; there are no dregs in this wine, no dead flies in this ointment. The joy of the Lord is solid and enduring. Vanity hath not looked upon it, but discretion and prudence testify that it abideth the test of years, and is in time and in eternity worthy to be called "the only true delight." For nourishment, consolation, exhilaration, and refreshment, no wine can rival the love of Jesus. Let us drink to the full this evening. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings**

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

L and E serve in a Creative Access country. L is working to make evangelical literature available to the nations so that people can come to Christ. Pray today for their plans to move in April to a different city in Asia to begin a new work reaching high school students who have defected from a closed country.

Thrive Lonsdale is led by CSPC member Clayton Wood. This organization challenges inner-city youth with the love of Jesus Christ to serve others and reconcile by creatively meeting their spiritual, educational, and recreational needs through Bible study, tutoring, mentoring and outings. Pray today for the youth reached by this ministry that they might feel loved and supported by the Thrive team of volunteers and staff.

Notes.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

“Serve the Lord with gladness.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 100:2

Delight in divine service is a token of acceptance. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not serving him at all; they bring the form of homage, but the life is absent. Our God requires no slaves to grace his throne; he is the Lord of the empire of love, and would have his servants dressed in the livery of joy. The angels of God serve him with songs, not with groans; a murmur or a sigh would be a mutiny in their ranks. That obedience which is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looketh at the heart, and if he seeth that we serve him from force, and not because we love him, he will reject our offering. Service coupled with cheerfulness is heart-service, and therefore true. Take away joyful willingness from the Christian, and you have removed *the test of his sincerity*. If a man be driven to battle, he is no patriot; but he who marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, “It is sweet for one’s country to die,” proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness is *the support of our strength*; in the joy of the Lord are we strong. It acts as *the remover of difficulties*. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railway carriage. Without oil the axle soon grows hot, and accidents occur; and if there be not a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, our spirits will be clogged with weariness. The man who is cheerful in his service of God, proves that obedience is his element; he can sing,

“Make me to walk in thy commands,

’Tis a delightful road.”

Reader, let us put this question - do *you* serve the Lord *with gladness*? Let us show to the people of the world, who think our religion to be slavery, that it is to us a delight and a joy! Let our gladness proclaim that we serve a good Master. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Paul and Karan Davis](#) have been working with TEAM in France since 1978 in church-planting ministries. In 2010, they moved to the city of Pontcharra, strategically located at the junction of the valleys, major highways, and railways that link the cities of Albertville, Chambéry, and Grenoble. Pray today for Karan who is recovering well from a fall that broke her hip. She is now able to walk with crutches.

[Volta a Biblia](#) is a Bible Training College equipping church leaders in Macia, Mozambique. Pray today for the faculty of the college as they prepare and teach the students.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

"In my flesh shall I see God."

Today's Devotional Reading

Job 19:26

Mark the subject of Job's devout anticipation "I shall see God." He does not say, "I shall see the saints" - though doubtless that will be untold felicity - but, "I shall see God." It is not - "I shall see the pearly gates, I shall behold the walls of jasper, I shall gaze upon the crowns of gold," but "I shall see God." This is the sum and substance of heaven, this is the joyful hope of all believers. It is their delight to see him now in the ordinances by faith. They love to behold him in communion and in prayer; but there in heaven they shall have an open and unclouded vision, and thus seeing "him as he is," shall be made completely like him. *Likeness to God* - what can we wish for more? And *a sight of God* - what can we desire better? Some read the passage, "Yet, I shall see God in my flesh," and find here an allusion to Christ, as the "Word made flesh," and that glorious beholding of him which shall be the splendour of the latter days. Whether so or not it is certain that Christ shall be the object of our eternal vision; nor shall we ever want any joy beyond that of seeing him. Think not that this will be a narrow sphere for the mind to dwell in. It is but one source of delight, but that source is infinite. All his attributes shall be subjects for contemplation, and as he is infinite under each aspect, there is no fear of exhaustion. His works, his gifts, his love to us, and his glory in all his purposes, and in all his actions, these shall make a theme which will be ever new. The patriarch looked forward to this sight of God as *a personal enjoyment*. "Whom mine eye shall behold, and not another." Take realizing views of heaven's bliss; think what it will be *to you*. "*Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.*" All earthly brightness fades and darkens as we gaze upon it, but here is a brightness which can never dim, a glory which can never fade - "*I shall see God.*" - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Mark and Annemarie Dye](#) are passionate about building Christian leaders to mobilize and equip the African Church for mission in the world. Kenya has struggled through 2 elections since August. This has caused a lot of disruption to normal life. Pray that the opposition party will accept the ruling of the courts and that life will return to normal rhythms soon.

[Wears Valley Ranch](#) offers a Christian home, education, and counseling to children from families in crisis. Their vision is to see each child inspired to follow Christ, healed from the past, and equipped to reach their full potential. Pray today for the staff of WVR as they model Christ's love and salvation to the residents.

Notes.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

"I have prayed for thee."

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 22:32

How encouraging is the thought of the Redeemer's never-ceasing intercession for us. When we pray, he pleads for us; and when we are *not* praying, he is advocating our cause, and by his supplications shielding us from unseen dangers. Notice the word of comfort addressed to Peter - "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but" - what? "But go and pray for yourself." That would be good advice, but it is not so written. Neither does he say, "But I will keep you watchful, and so you shall be preserved." That were a great blessing. No, it is, "*But I have prayed for thee*, that thy faith fail not." We little know what we owe to our Saviour's prayers. When we reach the hill-tops of heaven, and look back upon all the way whereby the Lord our God hath led us, how we shall praise him who, before the eternal throne, undid the mischief which Satan was doing upon earth. How shall we thank him because he never held his peace, but day and night pointed to the wounds upon his hands, and carried our names upon his breastplate! Even before Satan had begun to tempt, Jesus had forestalled him and entered a plea in heaven. Mercy outruns malice. Mark, he does not say, "Satan hath *desired* to have you." He checks Satan even in his very desire, and nips it in the bud. He does not say, "But I have desired to pray for you." No, but "*I have prayed for you*: I have done it already; I have gone to court and entered a counterplea even before an accusation is made." O Jesus, what a comfort it is that thou hast pleaded our cause against our unseen enemies; countermined their mines, and unmasked their ambushes. Here is a matter for joy, gratitude, hope, and confidence. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Michael and Kim Essenburg](#) are serving at Okinawa Christian School (OCS), a school for missionary children and children of business and professional people in Okinawa, Japan. Pray today that God will use the message heard at OCSI's Christmas program to work in the hearts of students, parents, and grandparents.

[World Mission Centre](#) was established in 1989 in to awake a deeper understanding of world evangelization and to mobilize Christians at a local church level to heed the call of the Great Commission. The Live School seeks to train thousands of workers to join worldwide efforts to reach the unreached. Pray today for the World Mission Centre team and all who are receiving training through the Live School.

Notes.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12

“I have yet to speak on God’s behalf.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Job 36:2

We ought not to court publicity for our virtue, or notoriety for our zeal; but, at the same time, it is a sin to be always seeking to hide that which God has bestowed upon us for the good of others. A Christian is not to be a village in a valley, but “a city set upon a hill;” he is not to be a candle under a bushel, but a candle in a candlestick, giving light to all. Retirement may be lovely in its season, and to hide one’s self is doubtless modest, but the hiding of *Christ* in us can never be justified, and the keeping back of truth which is precious to ourselves is a sin against others and an offence against God. If you are of a nervous temperament and of retiring disposition, take care that you do not too much indulge this trembling propensity, lest you should be useless to the church. Seek in the name of him who was not ashamed of you to do some little violence to your feelings, and tell to others what Christ has told to you. If thou canst not speak with trumpet tongue, use the still small voice. If the pulpit must not be thy tribune, if the press may not carry on its wings thy words, yet say with Peter and John, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.” By Sychar’s well talk to the Samaritan woman, if thou canst not on the mountain preach a sermon; utter the praises of Jesus in the house, if not in the temple; in the field, if not upon the exchange; in the midst of thine own household, if thou canst not in the midst of the great family of man. From the hidden springs within let sweetly flowing rivulets of testimony flow forth, giving drink to every passer-by. Hide not thy talent; trade with it; and thou shalt bring in good interest to thy Lord and Master. To speak for God will be refreshing to ourselves, cheering to saints, useful to sinners, and honouring to the Saviour. Dumb children are an affliction to their parents. Lord, unloose all thy children’s tongue.
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Bill Harding](#) is currently a special representative for SIM in North America. God is using Bill’s gifts and rich experience in Ethiopia as a conference speaker to challenge and reaffirm the priority of world missions. Pray today for their son, Drew, and his family as they serve in Stellenbosch, South Africa, with Senai Global, a non-profit connecting people with purpose.

[World Gospel Mission](#) partners with individuals and churches worldwide to make disciples of Christ and encourage believers to become missions-active through ministries that reach the whole person - physically and spiritually - transforming communities. Pray today for all the missionaries deployed by this organization.

Notes.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

“The iron did swim.”

Today's Devotional Reading

2 Kings 6:9

The axe-head seemed hopelessly lost, and as it was borrowed, the honour of the prophetic band was likely to be imperiled, and so the name of their God to be compromised. Contrary to all expectation, the iron was made to mount from the depth of the stream and to swim; for things impossible with man are possible with God. I knew a man in Christ but a few years ago who was called to undertake a work far exceeding his strength. It appeared so difficult as to involve absurdity in the bare idea of attempting it. Yet he was called thereto, and his faith rose with the occasion; God honoured his faith, unlooked-for aid was sent, and the iron did swim. Another of the Lord's family was in grievous financial straits, he was able to meet all claims, and much more if he could have realized a certain portion of his estate, but he was overtaken with a sudden pressure; he sought for friends in vain, but faith led him to the unfailing Helper, and lo, the trouble was averted, his footsteps were enlarged, and the iron did swim. A third had a sorrowful case of depravity to deal with. He had taught, reproved, warned, invited, and interceded, but all in vain. Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon, the stubborn spirit would not relent. Then came an agony of prayer, and before long a blessed answer was sent from heaven. The hard heart was broken, the iron did swim.

Beloved reader, what is thy desperate case? What heavy matter hast thou in hand this evening? Bring it hither. The God of the prophets lives, and lives to help his saints. He will not suffer thee to lack any good thing. Believe thou in the Lord of hosts! Approach him pleading the name of Jesus, and the iron shall swim; thou too shalt see the finger of God working marvels for his people. According to thy faith be it unto thee, and yet again the iron shall swim. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[*Bruce and Laura Harris*](#) have been running SEND International's camp and conference ministry in the mountains of western Tokyo for many years. The Harrises are returning to church planting in 2018. They are now in the U.S. on home assignment to prepare for this new ministry. Pray today for the training opportunities with Entrust Ministry that the Harrises have scheduled before their return to Japan in 2018.

[*World Horizons*](#) is a network of people, joined together by relationship and a common goal of reaching the unreached. Pray today for the work of all the people partnering with World Horizons around the world.

Notes.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

“Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Matthew 14:30

Sinking times are praying times with the Lord's servants. Peter neglected prayer at starting upon his venturesome journey, but when he began to sink his danger made him a suppliant, and his cry though late was not too late. In our hours of bodily pain and mental anguish, we find ourselves as naturally driven to prayer as the wreck is driven upon the shore by the waves. The fox goes to its hole for protection; the bird flies to the wood for shelter; and even so the tried believer hastens to the mercy seat for safety. Heaven's great harbour of refuge is All-prayer; thousands of weather-beaten vessels have found a haven there, and the moment a storm comes on, it is wise for us to make for it with all sail.

Short prayers are long enough. There were but three words in the petition which Peter gasped out, but they were sufficient for his purpose. Not length but strength is desirable. A sense of need is a mighty teacher of brevity. If our prayers had less of the tail feathers of pride and more wing they would be all the better. Verbiage is to devotion as chaff to the wheat. Precious things lie in small compass, and all that is real prayer in many a long address might have been uttered in a petition as short as that of Peter.

Our extremities are the Lord's opportunities. Immediately a keen sense of danger forces an anxious cry from us the ear of Jesus hears, and with him ear and heart go together, and the hand does not long linger. At the last moment we appeal to our Master, but his swift hand makes up for our delays by instant and effectual action. Are we nearly engulfed by the boisterous waters of affliction? Let us then lift up our souls unto our Saviour, and we may rest assured that he will not suffer us to perish. When we can do nothing Jesus can do all things; let us enlist his powerful aid upon our side, and all will be well. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Steve Hoke](#) works with national church denominations and mission organizations in 25 countries and North America in the area of leader development and strategic life coaching. Pray today for Church Resource Ministries as they recruit young men and women to catalyze Disciplemaking Movements (DMM) in the difficult places of the world (the Middle East, North and West Africa, and Southeast Asia). Pray for 50 new leaders or more in 2018, and equip the CRM staff with vision and faith to steward them into the right roles of cross-cultural leadership.

[Worldwide Discipleship Association](#) has a mission to serve the church worldwide by developing Christ-like character in people and equipping them to disciple others according to the pattern Jesus used to train his disciples. Carroll and Shirley Coakley, members of Cedar Springs and the Global Mission Group, are part of this organization's international staff and serve on short-term mission teams to Myanmar. Pray today for the volunteers serving with this ministry.

Notes.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

“But I give myself unto prayer.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 109:4

Lying tongues were busy against the reputation of David, but he did not defend himself; he moved the case into a higher court, and pleaded before the great King himself. Prayer is the safest method of replying to words of hatred. The Psalmist prayed in no cold-hearted manner, he gave himself to the exercise - threw his whole soul and heart into it - straining every sinew and muscle, as Jacob did when wrestling with the angel. Thus, and thus only, shall any of us speed at the throne of grace. As a shadow has no power because there is no substance in it, even so that supplication, in which a man's proper self is not thoroughly present in agonizing earnestness and vehement desire, is utterly ineffectual, for it lacks that which would give it force. “Fervent prayer,” says an old divine, “like a cannon planted at the gates of heaven, makes them fly open.” The common fault with the most of us is our readiness to yield to distractions. Our thoughts go roving hither and thither, and we make little progress towards our desired end. Like quicksilver our mind will not hold together, but rolls off this way and that. How great an evil this is! It injures us, and what is worse, it insults our God. What should we think of a petitioner, if, while having an audience with a prince, he should be playing with a feather or catching a fly?

Continuance and perseverance are intended in the expression of our text. David did not cry once, and then relapse into silence; his holy clamour was continued till it brought down the blessing. Prayer must not be our chance work, but our daily business, our habit and vocation. As artists give themselves to their models, and poets to their classical pursuits, so must we addict ourselves to prayer. We must be immersed in prayer as in our element, and so pray without ceasing. Lord, teach us so to pray that we may be more and more prevalent in supplication. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Hugo and Jackie](#) are from South Africa and have two children, Marlena and John. Hugo is one of the leaders of a media ministry and has also been providing oversight to the PALM ministry (Preparing Arab World Leaders for Ministry) for the last few years. Pray today for M and A as they adjust to living in the UK. M is the new Director of Arab World Media.

[Wycliffe Associates](#) (India, Kenya, Nepal) accelerates Bible translation around the world by empowering national translators and equipping the local church to translate God's Word into every language. [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#) (China) has Bible translators located in China translating the Bible into local dialects. Pray today for these translators and their work.

Notes:

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

“The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Daniel 9:26

Blessed be his name, there was no cause of death in him. Neither original nor actual sin had defiled him, and therefore death had no claim upon him. No man could have taken his life from him justly, for he had done no man wrong, and no man could even have lain him by force unless he had been pleased to yield himself to die. But lo, one sins and another suffers. Justice was offended by us, but found its satisfaction in him. Rivers of tears, mountains of offerings, seas of the blood of bullocks, and hills of frankincense, could not have availed for the removal of sin; but Jesus was cut off for us, and the cause of wrath was cut off at once, for sin was put away forever. Herein is wisdom, whereby substitution, the sure and speedy way of atonement, was devised! Herein is condescension, which brought Messiah, the Prince, to wear a crown of thorns, and die upon the cross! Herein is love, which led the Redeemer to lay down his life for his enemies!

It is not enough, however, to admire the spectacle of the innocent bleeding for the guilty, we must make sure of our interest therein. The special object of the Messiah's death was the salvation of his church; have we a part and a lot among those for whom he gave his life a ransom? Did the Lord Jesus stand as our representative? Are we healed by his stripes? It will be a terrible thing indeed if we should come short of a portion in his sacrifice; it were better for us that we had never been born. Solemn as the question is, it is a joyful circumstance that it is one which may be answered clearly and without mistake. To all who believe on him the Lord Jesus is a present Saviour, and upon them all the blood of reconciliation has been sprinkled. Let all who trust in the merit of Messiah's death be joyful at every remembrance of him, and let their holy gratitude lead them to the fullest consecration to his cause. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Darlene Johnson](#) has been a member of MTW's church-planting team in Nagoya, Japan, since 2000. She teaches conversational English and evangelistic Bible studies and is involved in choral and instrumental music ministry. Pray today for Japanese individuals and families coming to Nisshin Christ Church who are not believing yet. Pray that God will give them saving faith.

[YOKE](#) mentors middle school children by building friendships with Christian adults through clubs, camps, and Kid Time (hanging out with kids in their world). Currently YOKE reaches out to nearly 20,000 students at 26 middle schools located in Anderson, Blount, Grainger, Jefferson, and Knox counties. Pray today for the Yoke volunteers as they connect with middle schoolers this semester.

Notes:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17

“And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house.”

Today's Devotional Reading

2 Samuel 11:2

At that hour David saw Bathsheba. We are never out of the reach of temptation. Both at home and abroad we are liable to meet with allurements to evil; the morning opens with peril, and the shades of evening find us still in jeopardy. They are well kept whom God keeps, but woe unto those who go forth into the world, or even dare to walk their own house unarmed. Those who think themselves secure are more exposed to danger than any others. The armour-bearer of Sin is Self-confidence.

David should have been engaged in fighting the Lord’s battles, instead of which he tarried at Jerusalem, and gave himself up to luxurious repose, for he arose from his bed at eventide. Idleness and luxury are the devil’s jackals, and find him abundant prey. In stagnant waters noxious creatures swarm, and neglected soil soon yields a dense tangle of weeds and briars. Oh for the constraining love of Jesus to keep us active and useful! When I see the King of Israel sluggishly leaving his couch at the close of the day, and falling at once into temptation, let me take warning, and set holy watchfulness to guard the door.

Is it possible that the king had mounted his housetop for retirement and devotion? If so, what a caution is given us to count no place, however secret, a sanctuary from sin! While our hearts are so like a tinder-box, and sparks so plentiful, we had need use all diligence in all places to prevent a blaze. Satan can climb housetops, and enter closets, and even if we could shut out that foul fiend, our own corruptions are enough to work our ruin unless grace prevent. Reader, beware of evening temptations. Be not secure. The sun is down but sin is up. We need a watchman for the night as well as a guardian for the day. O blessed Spirit, keep us from all evil this night. Amen. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Michael and Diana Johnson](#) have been serving with People International. As International Director, Michael provided broad vision and leadership for the mission. As they near retirement from People International, they have begun a new work with CSPP that involves recruiting churches to partner with the work with refugees in Europe. Pray today for a new partnership with Gateways2Life, a ministry that is setting up a community center for women and children just outside a refugee camp on Lesbos. In that camp there are 1500 families and single women.

[Young Life Europe](#) is an organization that pursues and befriends teenagers to introduce them to Jesus. Jim and Barbara McNamee are working with Young Life Europe as Regional Developers. They are developing a new area for YL - the Basque Country - and serving as Life and Ministry Coaches for YL staff across the region. Pray today for Jim and Barbara as they recruit and train Basque adult committee and volunteer leaders.

Notes.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

“He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 24:27

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had a most profitable journey. Their companion and teacher was *the best of tutors*; the interpreter one of a thousand, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Lord Jesus condescended to become a preacher of the gospel, and he was not ashamed to exercise his calling before an audience of two persons, neither does he now refuse to become the teacher of even one. Let us court the company of so excellent an Instructor, for till he is made unto us wisdom we shall never be wise unto salvation.

This unrivalled tutor used as his class-book *the best of books*. Although able to reveal fresh truth, he preferred to expound the old. He knew by his omniscience what was the most instructive way of teaching, and by turning at once to Moses and the prophets, he showed us that the surest road to wisdom is not speculation, reasoning, or reading human books, but meditation upon the Word of God. The readiest way to be spiritually rich in heavenly knowledge is to dig in this mine of diamonds, to gather pearls from this heavenly sea. When Jesus himself sought to enrich others, he wrought in the quarry of Holy Scripture.

The favoured pair were led to consider *the best of subjects*, for Jesus spake of Jesus, and expounded the things concerning himself. Here the diamond cut the diamond, and what could be more admirable? The Master of the House unlocked his own doors, conducted the guests to his table, and placed his own dainties upon it. He who hid the treasure in the field himself guided the searchers to it. Our Lord would naturally discourse upon the sweetest of topics, and he could find none sweeter than his own person and work: with an eye to these we should always search the Word. O for grace to study the Bible with Jesus as both our teacher and our lesson! - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Mike and Stephanie](#) are working with a project called LEARN (Leadership Education and Resource Network) based in Beirut, Lebanon. The project's aim is to provide high quality, interactive Biblical training via Internet to Arabic-speakers wherever they are found. Pray today for the refugee crisis that continues in Lebanon and around the world. Pray that many who are fleeing from oppressive regimes would be encountered by the caring and welcoming body of Christ.

Beatriz and Gustavo Fuentes lead the work of [Young Life](#) in Mozambique. Beatriz first encountered Young Life in Brazil and became a Christian through that encounter. The Fuentes moved to Beira, Mozambique in 2010 and began building relationships with teenagers there to introduce them to Jesus. Pray today for the Fuentes and the students they are reaching through Young Life.

Notes:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 24:25

He whom we viewed last evening as opening Scripture, we here perceive opening the understanding. In the first work he has many fellow-labourers, but in the second he stands alone; many can bring the Scriptures to the mind, but the Lord alone can prepare the mind to receive the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus differs from all other teachers; they reach the ear, but he instructs the heart; they deal with the outward letter, but he imparts an inward taste for the truth, by which we perceive its savour and spirit. The most unlearned of men become ripe scholars in the school of grace when the Lord Jesus by his Holy Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom to them, and grants the divine anointing by which they are enabled to behold the invisible. Happy are we if we have had our understandings cleared and strengthened by the Master! How many men of profound learning are ignorant of eternal things! They know the killing letter of revelation, but its killing spirit they cannot discern; they have a veil upon their hearts which the eyes of carnal reason cannot penetrate. Such was our case a little time ago; we who now see were once utterly blind; truth was to us as beauty in the dark, a thing unnoticed and neglected. Had it not been for the love of Jesus we should have remained to this moment in utter ignorance, for without his gracious opening of our understanding, we could no more have attained to spiritual knowledge than an infant can climb the Pyramids, or an ostrich fly up to the stars. Jesus' College is the only one in which God's truth can be really learned; other schools may teach us what is to be believed, but Christ's alone can show us how to believe it. Let us sit at the feet of Jesus, and by earnest prayer call in his blessed aid that our dull wits may grow brighter, and our feeble understandings may receive heavenly things. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Tim and Barbie K.](#) are working to translate the Bible into the Makori language, currently working in Acts and Galatians. Barbie is also guest house manager and Regional Director, having responsibility for more than 20 missionaries in the area. Their main goal is to see a Makori church effectively using its own Bible translation. Pray today for Tim as he has been proofreading a draft of these epistles: Philippians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and I and II Thessalonians. Continue to pray for accuracy and attentiveness to potential problems/errors.

[Young Life Tennessee](#) seeks to pursue and befriend lost or disinterested teenagers to introduce them to Jesus, share the gospel, and help them grow in their faith. Pray today for the staff and volunteers with Young Life Knoxville as they connect with students this semester.

Notes.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 119:36

There are divers kinds of vanity. The cap and bells of the fool, the mirth of the world, the dance, the lyre, and the cup of the dissolute, all these men know to be vanities; they wear upon their forefront their proper name and title. Far more treacherous are those equally vain things, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in the counting-house as in the theatre. If he be spending his life in amassing wealth, he passes his days in a vain show. Unless we follow Christ, and make our God the great object of life, we only differ in appearance from the most frivolous. It is clear that there is much need of the first prayer of our text. “Quicken thou me in thy way.” The Psalmist confesses that he is dull, heavy, lumpy, all but dead. Perhaps, dear reader, you feel the same. We are so sluggish that the best motives cannot quicken us, apart from the Lord himself. What! will not hell quicken me? Shall I think of sinners perishing, and yet not be awakened? Will not heaven quicken me? Can I think of the reward that awaiteth the righteous, and yet be cold? Will not death quicken me? Can I think of dying, and standing before my God, and yet be slothful in my Master’s service? Will not Christ’s love constrain me? Can I think of his dear wounds, can I sit at the foot of his cross, and not be stirred with fervency and zeal? It seems so! No mere consideration can quicken us to zeal, but God himself must do it, hence the cry, “Quicken *thou* me.” The Psalmist breathes out his whole soul in vehement pleadings: his body and his soul unite in prayer. “Turn away mine eyes,” says the body: “Quicken thou me,” cries the soul. This is a fit prayer for every day. O Lord, hear it in my case this night. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[*Bobby and Teresa LaDage*](#) are working with Redeemer City to City (the church planting arm of Redeemer Church in NYC) envisioning, equipping, and mentoring church planters and their wives in order to see gospel-centered churches reach the major cities of Eastern and Central Europe. They are also now serving as European Regional Leaders for United World Mission. Pray today for two men who have been preparing to start a training center in Warsaw, Poland. Pray for other men and women from Poland who will eventually be trained to start new churches. Cedar Springs gave the funds for this project.

[*A Hand Up For Women*](#), Knox County Christian Women’s Job Corps, strives to be a source of hope to women with the desire and motivation to lead a more self-sufficient life. Pray for the women reached by this ministry that they may know the love of Jesus.

Notes.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

"He was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst?"

Today's Devotional Reading

Judges 15:18

Samson was thirsty and ready to die. The difficulty was totally different from any which the hero had met before. Merely to get thirst assuaged is nothing like so great a matter as to be delivered from a thousand Philistines! but when the thirst was upon him, Samson felt that little present difficulty more weighty than the great past difficulty out of which he had so specially been delivered. It is very usual for God's people, when they have enjoyed a great deliverance, to find a little trouble too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines, and piles them up in heaps, and then faints for a little water! Jacob wrestles with God at Peniel, and overcomes Omnipotence itself, and then goes "halting on his thigh!" Strange that there must be a shrinking of the sinew whenever we win the day. As if the Lord must teach us our littleness, our nothingness, in order to keep us within bounds. Samson boasted right loudly when he said, "I have slain a thousand men." His boastful throat soon grew hoarse with thirst, and he betook himself to prayer. God has many ways of humbling his people. Dear child of God, if after great mercy you are laid very low, your case is not an unusual one. When David had mounted the throne of Israel, he said, "I am this day weak, though anointed king." You must expect to feel weakest when you are enjoying your greatest triumph. If God has wrought for you great deliverances in the past, your present difficulty is only like Samson's thirst, and the Lord will not let you faint, nor suffer the daughter of the uncircumcised to triumph over you. The road of sorrow is the road to heaven, but there are wells of refreshing water all along the route. So, tried brother, cheer your heart with Samson's words, and rest assured that God will deliver you ere long. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[John and Kathy Lesondak](#) are church planters who work across denominational lines in Slovakia to encourage and enable pastors in their work. The Lesondaks utilize various opportunities to engage with local residents, including classes in pottery and sewing. They are in the U.S. now on home assignment until Spring 2018, but ask that you pray for their new national partners, Tomas Henzel and Juraj Sabol.

Cedar Springs is planting All Souls Church in Bristol, Tennessee. Pray today for the leaders of this church and the people in the upper East Tennessee region that can be reached by the ministry of this church.

Notes.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22

“Doth Job fear God for nought?”

Today's Devotional Reading

Job 1:9

This was the wicked question of Satan concerning that upright man of old, but there are many in the present day concerning whom it might be asked with justice, for they love God after a fashion because he prospers them; but if things went ill with them, they would give up all their boasted faith in God. If they can clearly see that since the time of their supposed conversion the world has gone prosperously with them, then they will love God in their poor carnal way; but if they endure adversity, they rebel against the Lord. Their love is the love of the table, not of the host; a love to the cupboard, not to the master of the house. As for the true Christian, he expects to have his reward in the next life, and to endure hardness in this. The promise of the old covenant is adversity. Remember Christ's words - “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit” - What? *“He purgeth it, that it may bring forth fruit.”* If you bring forth fruit, you will have to endure affliction. “Alas!” you say, “that is a terrible prospect.” But this affliction works out such precious results, that the Christian who is the subject of it must learn to rejoice in tribulations, because as his tribulations abound, so his consolations abound by Christ Jesus. Rest assured, if you are a child of God, you will be no stranger to the rod. Sooner or later every bar of gold must pass through the fire. Fear not, but rather rejoice that such fruitful times are in store for you, for in them you will be weaned from earth and made meet for heaven; you will be delivered from clinging to the present, and made to long for those eternal things which are so soon to be revealed to you. When you feel that as regards the present you do serve God for nought, you will then rejoice in the infinite reward of the future. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Josh and Jenny M.](#) are working with the RAK Church Plant in the United Arab Emirates. The RAK Evangelical Church has now been formally constituted as a church with about 40 members. The Manleys have recently celebrated living in UAE for 5 years. Pray today that the new church will not grow weary in loving each other well inside their walls and sharing the good news faithfully outside the walls.

[Al Massira](#) is an online course for groups to use that presents the Christian faith through a chronological overview of the Bible. It centers the Christian faith in its original Middle Eastern context and includes a variety of integrated activities: viewing the films, open discussion, prayer, food and companionship. Pray today for those just starting the course, that they will find Jesus through it and begin a new life with him.

Notes.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

“We will remember thy love more than wine.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 1:4

Jesus will not let his people forget his love. If all the love they have enjoyed should be forgotten, he will visit them with fresh love. “Do you forget my cross?” says he, “I will cause you to remember it; for at my table I will manifest myself anew to you. Do you forget what I did for you in the council-chamber of eternity? I will remind you of it, for you shall need a counsellor, and shall find me ready at your call.” Mothers do not let their children forget them. If the boy has gone to Australia, and does not write home, his mother writes - “Has John forgotten his mother?” Then there comes back a sweet epistle, which proves that the gentle reminder was not in vain. So is it with Jesus, he says to us, “Remember me,” and our response is, “We will remember thy love.” *We will remember thy love and its matchless history. It is ancient as the glory which thou hadst with the Father before the world was. We remember, O Jesus, thine eternal love when thou didst become our Surety, and espouse us as thy betrothed. We remember the love which suggested the sacrifice of thyself, the love which, until the fullness of time, mused over that sacrifice, and long for the hour whereof in the volume of the book it was written of thee, “Lo, I come.” We remember thy love, O Jesus as it was manifest to us in thy holy life, from the manger of Bethlehem to the garden of Gethsemane. We track thee from the cradle to the grave - for every word and deed of thine was love - and we rejoice in thy love, which death did not exhaust; thy love which shone resplendent in thy resurrection. We remember that burning fire of love which will never let thee hold thy peace until thy chosen ones be all safely housed, until Zion be glorified, and Jerusalem settled on her everlasting foundations of light and love in heaven. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings**

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Heath and Angela Many](#) have been serving at Tenwek Hospital, a Christian mission hospital in rural Kenya, as medical missionaries in their respective fields (surgery and obstetrics/gynecology). Pray today for the soon-to-be graduates of PAACS as they look for jobs and adjust to being on their own, that they will take away from their training a strong knowledge of Christ and an ability to be missional with their lives.

[Arab Baptist Theological Seminary's](#) mission is serve the church in their region. They offer specialized learning resources and equips faithful men and women for effective service. Pray today for the faculty and students.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

“Martha was cumbered about much serving.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 10:40

Her fault was not that she *served*: the condition of a servant well becomes every Christian. “I serve,” should be the motto of all the princes of the royal family of heaven. Nor was it her fault that she had “*much serving*.” We cannot do too much. Let us do all that we possibly can; let head, and heart, and hands, be engaged in the Master’s service. It was no fault of hers that she was busy preparing a feast for the Master. Happy Martha, to have an opportunity of entertaining so blessed a guest; and happy, too, to have the spirit to throw her whole soul so heartily into the engagement. Her fault was that she grew “*cumbered with much serving*,” so that she forgot *him*, and only remembered the service. She allowed service to override communion, and so presented one duty stained with the blood of another. We ought to be Martha and Mary in one: we should do much service, and have much communion at the same time. For this we need great grace. It is easier to serve than to commune. Joshua never grew weary in fighting with the Amalekites; but Moses, on the top of the mountain in prayer, needed two helpers to sustain his hands. The more spiritual the exercise, the sooner we tire in it. The choicest fruits are the hardest to rear: the most heavenly graces are the most difficult to cultivate. Beloved, while we do not neglect external things, which are good enough in themselves, we ought also to see to it that we enjoy living, personal fellowship with Jesus. See to it that sitting at the Saviour’s feet is not neglected, even though it be under the specious pretext of doing him service. The first thing for our soul’s health, the first thing for his glory, and the first thing for our own usefulness, is to keep ourselves in perpetual communion with the Lord Jesus, and to see that the vital spirituality of our religion is maintained over and above everything else in the world. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

We are providing prayer support for two families living in Creative Access countries who are "Tent Makers." Their work gives them access to the local population. Pray today for wisdom and safety for these two growing families.

Located in South Knoxville and led by Milad and Theresa Guirguis, who are displaced from Egypt, the [Arabic Church](#) is spreading the word of God and hope by embracing Christians and Muslims from all Arabic countries. Most of the members of the congregation are from Iraq, Egypt, and Syria, and many are refugees. Pray today for Milad and Theresa and the members of their church.

Notes.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Romans 3:31

When the believer is adopted into the Lord's family, his relationship to old Adam and the law ceases at once; but then he is under a new rule, and a new covenant. Believer, you are God's child; it is your first duty to obey your heavenly Father. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with: you are not a slave, but a child; and now, inasmuch as you are a beloved child, you are bound to obey your Father's faintest wish, the least intimation of his will. Does he bid you fulfil a sacred ordinance? It is at your peril that you neglect it, for you will be disobeying your Father. Does he command you to seek the image of Jesus? Is it not your joy to do so? Does Jesus tell you, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? Then not because the law commands, but because your Saviour enjoins, you will labour to be perfect in holiness. Does he bid his saints love one another? Do it, not because the law says, "Love thy neighbour," but because Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and this is the commandment that he has given unto you, "that ye love one another." Are you told to distribute to the poor? Do it, not because charity is a burden which you dare not shirk, but because Jesus teaches, "Give to him that asketh of thee." Does the Word say, "Love God with all your heart"? Look at the commandment and reply, "Ah! commandment, Christ hath fulfilled thee already - I have no need, therefore, to fulfil thee for my salvation, but I rejoice to yield obedience to thee because God is my Father now and he has a claim upon me, which I would not dispute." May the Holy Ghost make your heart obedient to the constraining power of Christ's love, that your prayer may be, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." Grace is the mother and nurse of holiness, and not the apologist of sin.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Tom and Juanita Matthews](#) serve in Tanzania and Kenya. Tom is a translation consultant to Bible translation teams from multiple people groups. Some of the groups are minimally reached for Christ and some are dominated by Islam. Pray today for wisdom for Tom as he serves the Mbugwe, Bende and Pimbwe translation teams in Tanzania, checking drafts of Luke with the Mbugwe in February and Bende/Pimbwe in January.

[Athletes in Action](#), the sports ministry of Cru, is ministering to college athletes at the University of Tennessee. Rachel and Jason Stankus and Teg and Mikkel Tegelaar minister to and through the athletic department and are trusting God to build a spiritual movement that impacts the campus, community and world for Christ. Pray today for Jason & Rachel and for Teg & Mikkel as they continue to build relationships with student athletes.

Notes.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

“All they that heard it wondered at those things.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 2:18

We must not cease to wonder at the great marvels of our God. It would be very difficult to draw a line between holy wonder and *real worship*; for when the soul is overwhelmed with the majesty of God's glory, though it may not express itself in song, or even utter its voice with bowed head in humble prayer, yet it silently adores. Our incarnate God is to be worshipped as “the Wonderful.” That God should consider his fallen creature, man, and instead of sweeping him away with the besom of destruction, should himself undertake to be man's Redeemer, and to pay his ransom price, is, indeed marvelous! But to each believer redemption is most marvelous as he views it in relation to himself. It is a miracle of grace indeed, that Jesus should forsake the thrones and royalties above, to suffer ignominiously below *for you*. Let your soul lose itself in wonder, for wonder is in this way a very practical emotion. Holy wonder will lead you to *grateful worship* and *heartfelt thanksgiving*. It will cause within you *godly watchfulness*; you will be afraid to sin against such a love as this. Feeling the presence of the mighty God in the gift of his dear Son, you will put off your shoes from off your feet, because the place whereon you stand is holy ground. You will be moved at the same time to *glorious hope*. If Jesus has done such marvelous things on your behalf, you will feel that heaven itself is not too great for your expectation. Who can be astonished at anything, when he has once been astonished at the manger and the cross? What is there wonderful left after one has seen the Saviour? Dear reader, it may be that from the quietness and solitariness of your life, you are scarcely able to imitate the shepherds of Bethlehem, who told what they had seen and heard, but you can, at least, fill up the circle of the worshippers before the throne, by wondering at what God has done.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Land C](#) are working in a Creative Access country for World Outreach. J. is developing an entry platform using sustainable technologies that will provide income and economic development for the people there. Pray today for safety for team members as there is now a lot of ocean travel.

[Becoming Like Christ](#) (BLC) is dedicated to equipping women to be all God means for them to be by providing a discipleship experience that is based on biblical principles in a small group of 10-12 followers of Jesus. Pray today for Kristin Cazana, the National Executive Director of BLC, and all the women currently involved in BLC.

Notes.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 2:19

There was an exercise, on the part of this blessed woman, of three powers of her being: her *memory* - she kept all these things; her *affections* - she kept them in her heart; her *intellect* - she pondered them; so that memory, affection, and understanding, were all exercised about the things which she had heard. Beloved, remember what you have heard of your Lord Jesus, and what he has done for you; make your heart the golden pot of manna to preserve the memorial of the heavenly bread whereon you have fed in days gone by. Let your memory treasure up everything about Christ which you have either felt, or known, or believed, and then let your fond affections hold *him* fast for evermore. Love the person of your Lord! Bring forth the alabaster box of your heart, even though it be broken, and let all the precious ointment of your affection come streaming on his pierced feet. Let your intellect be exercised concerning the Lord Jesus. Meditate upon what you read: stop not at the surface; dive into the depths. Be not as the swallow which toucheth the brook with her wing, but as the fish which penetrates the lowest wave. Abide with your Lord: let him not be to you as a wayfaring man, that tarryeth for a night, but constrain him, saying, “Abide with us, for the day is far spent.” Hold him, and do not let him go. The word “ponder,” means to weigh. Make ready the balances of judgment. Oh, but where are the scales that can weigh the Lord Christ? “He taketh up the isles as a very little thing:” - who shall take *him* up? “He weigheth the mountains in scales” - in what scales shall we weigh *him*? Be it so, if your understanding cannot comprehend, let your affections apprehend; and if your spirit cannot compass the Lord Jesus in the grasp of understanding, let it embrace him in the arms of affection. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

After years of leading Young Life Spain and Young Life Western Europe, [Jim and Barbara McNamee](#) are now developing new areas as part of the regional staff. They are working to start new ministries in the five countries of Western Europe, including Luxembourg, Andorra, and Italy. Their primary focus at this time is starting a new YL area in the Basque Country of Spain. Pray today for Barbara's family as they grieve the death of her brother in November.

[Bethany Christian Services](#) is a global organization caring for orphans and vulnerable children on five continents. They manifest the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services such as adoption, family support, foster care, pregnancy counseling, refuge services and infertility. Pray today for the staff as they work with families to facilitate adoptions.

Notes.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Luk3 2:20

What was the subject of their praise? They *praised God for what they had heard* - for the good tidings of great joy that a Saviour was born unto them. Let us copy them; let us also raise a song of thanksgiving that we have heard of Jesus and his salvation. They also *praised God for what they had seen*. There is the sweetest music - what we have experienced, what we have felt within, what we have made our own - “the things which we have made touching the King.” It is not enough to *hear* about Jesus: mere hearing may tune the harp, but the fingers of living faith must create the music. If you have seen Jesus with the God-giving sight of faith, suffer no cobwebs to linger among the harp strings, but loud to the praise of sovereign grace, awake your psaltery and harp. One point for which they praised God was *the agreement between what they had heard and what they had seen*. Observe the last sentence - “As it was told unto them.” Have you not found the gospel to be in yourselves just what the Bible said it would be? Jesus said he would give you rest - have you not enjoyed the sweetest peace in him? He said you should have joy, and comfort, and life through believing in him - have you not received all these? Are not his ways ways of pleasantness, and his paths, paths of peace? Surely you can say with the queen of Sheba, “The half has not been told me.” I have found Christ more sweet than his servants ever said he was. I looked upon his likeness as they painted it, but it was a mere daub compared with himself; for the King in his beauty outshines all imaginable loveliness. Surely what we have “*seen*” keeps pace with, nay, far exceeds, what we have “*heard*.” Let us, then, glorify and praise God for a Saviour so precious, and so satisfying. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Pete and Ruth Mitchell](#) are church planters in France with Mission to the World (MTW) and in collaboration with the Eglise Réformée Evangélique de France (French Reformed Evangelical Church). Pete's role is that of team leader. The Mitchells are living in Toulouse planting a new church in Tournefeuille. The church has been meeting in a new building since early July. Pray today for the Mitchells who are on home assignment for the next year. Pray that they will have safety, stamina, and joy in their travels while in the U.S.

The [Bible Society of Egypt](#) is the largest Arabic Bible publishing operation in the world. They are publishing the Scriptures in a variety of formats and media (print, audio, visual), with each product designed for a particular social, economic, age, and cultural interest group. Pray today for the staff as they perform the day-to-day tasks required to publish the Bibles.

Notes.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29

"The dove came in to him in the evening."

Today's Devotional Reading

Genesis 8:11

Blessed be the Lord for another day of mercy, even though I am now weary with its toils. Unto the preserver of men lift I my song of gratitude. The dove found no rest out of the ark, and therefore returned to it; and my soul has learned yet more fully than ever, this day, that there is no satisfaction to be found in earthly things - God alone can give rest to my spirit. As to my business, my possessions, my family, my attainments, these are all well enough in their way, but they cannot fulfil the desires of my immortal nature. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." It was at the still hour, when the gates of the day were closing, that with weary wing the dove came back to the master: O Lord, enable me this evening thus to return to Jesus. She could not endure to spend a night hovering over the restless waste, not can I bear to be even for another hour away from Jesus, the rest of my heart, the home of my spirit. She did not merely alight upon the roof of the ark, she "came in to him;" even so would my longing spirit look into the secret of the Lord, pierce to the interior of truth, enter into that which is within the veil, and reach to my Beloved in very deed. To Jesus must I come: short of the nearest and dearest intercourse with him my panting spirit cannot stay. Blessed Lord Jesus, be with me, reveal thyself, and abide with me all night, so that when I awake I may be still with thee. I note that the dove brought in her mouth an olive branch plucked off, the memorial of the past day, and a prophecy of the future. Have I no pleasing record to bring home? No pledge and earnest of lovingkindness yet to come? Yes, my Lord, I present thee my grateful acknowledgments for tender mercies which have been new every morning and fresh every evening; and now, I pray thee, put forth thy hand and take thy dove into thy bosom.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[Lucky and Sonnet Mnisi](#) are South African and serve in Mozambique. Lucky has pastored the Reformed Church in Mucatine and has helped plant other churches in Gaza Province, including Chake. Pray today for the church in Chake, that the believers will continue to thrive and grow in spite of difficulties.

[Bridges International](#) serves the needs of international students adjusting to living and studying at the University of Tennessee. Pray today for the international students on campus that they may understand the love of Jesus during this semester.

Notes.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.”

Today's Devotional Reading

Ephesians 1:11

When Jesus gave himself for us, he gave us all the rights and privileges which went with himself; so that now, although as eternal God, he has essential rights to which no creature may venture to pretend, yet as Jesus, the Mediator, the federal head of the covenant of grace, he has no heritage apart from us. All the glorious consequences of his obedience unto death are the joint riches of all who are in him, and on whose behalf he accomplished the divine will. See, he enters into glory, but not for himself alone, for it is written, “Whither the Forerunner is *for us* entered.” Heb. 6:20. Does he stand in the presence of God? - “He appears in the presence of God *for us*.” Heb. 9:24. Consider this, believer. You have no right to heaven in yourself: your right lies in Christ. If you are pardoned, it is through *his* blood; if you are justified, it is through *his* righteousness; if you are sanctified, it is because *he* is made of God unto you sanctification; if you shall be kept from falling, it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus; and if you are perfected at the last, it will be because you are complete in *him*. Thus Jesus is magnified - for all is in him and by him; thus the inheritance is made certain to us - for it is obtained in him; thus each blessing is the sweeter, and even heaven itself the brighter, because it is Jesus our Beloved “in whom” we have obtained all. Where is the man who shall estimate our divine portion? Weigh the riches of Christ in scales, and his treasure in balances, and then think to count the treasures which belong to the saints. Reach the bottom of Christ’s sea of joy, and then hope to understand the bliss which God hath prepared for them that love him. Overleap the boundaries of Christ’s possessions, and then dream of a limit to the fair inheritance of the elect. “All things are yours, for ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

F & S are working alongside Arab believers toward the goal of seeing churches planted for those who do not have a church. Their focus is to mobilize, resource and train nationals for this purpose. Pray today for F as he finishes up interviews for his DMin.

[Bridge Refugee Services](#) facilitates the resettlement of refugees in East Tennessee. Bridge empowers refugees to become self-sufficient, and works closely with many volunteers, employers, and churches that sponsor refugee families. Pray today for all the refugee families that have recently settled in Knoxville and those that are waiting to come to the United States. Pray that God will remove the barriers that prevent them from entering our country.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

“Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush.”

Today's Devotional Reading

2 Samuel 18:23

Running is not everything, there is much in the way which we select: a swift foot over hill and down dale will not keep pace with a slower traveler upon level ground. How is it with my spiritual journey, am I labouring up the hill of my own works and down into the ravines of my own humiliations and resolutions, or do I run by the plain way of “Believe and live”? How blessed is it to wait upon the Lord by faith! The soul runs without weariness, and walks without fainting, in the way of believing. Christ Jesus is the way of life, and he is a plain way, a pleasant way, a way suitable for the tottering feet and feeble knees of trembling sinners: am I found in this way, or am I hunting after another track such as priest craft or metaphysics may promise me? I read of the way of holiness, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein: have I been delivered from proud reason and been brought as a little child to rest in Jesus’ love and blood? If so, by God’s grace I shall outrun the strongest runner who chooses any other path. This truth I may remember to my profit in my daily cares and needs. It will be my wisest course to go at once to my God, and not to wander in a roundabout manner to this friend and that. He knows my wants and can relieve them, to whom should I repair but to himself by the direct appeal of prayer, and the plain argument of the promise. “Straightforward makes the best runner.” I will not parlay with the servants, but hasten to their master.

In reading this passage, it strikes me that if men vie with each other in common matters, and one outruns the other, I ought to be in solemn earnestness so to run that I may obtain. Lord, help me to gird up the loins of my mind, and may I press forward towards the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

[H and L](#) serve in Asia and are taking on new roles in 2018. H has been asked to be a coordinator for their agency’s efforts to facilitate the development of local mission movements within one country in Asia, particularly for reaching the peoples of East Asia. L will be working to connect Asian citizens who have become Christians while studying abroad with local churches in their own countries upon their return. Pray for both of them as they begin these new ministries.

[Campus Renewal Ministries](#) is a National Christian Ministry devoted to seeing transformation on college campuses for God’s glory. They have been around for over 15 years and work with colleges across America. Pray today for their leaders to have a renewed vision for ministry on UT’s campus as they serve students.

Notes.