



November 9, 2021

This Week at St. Andrew's



Prayer of the Pastor

As promised, Sunday, November 14 we focus on the disciple's request, "Lord, teach us to pray." Additionally, we will turn the clocks back to 1 Samuel and see how the desperate prayer of Hannah to bear a child speaks to the desperation in our own lives.

Today I share an article written by James Emery White, the senior pastor of Mecklenburg Community Church in Charlotte, North Carolina; President of Serious Times, a ministry that explores the intersection of faith and culture and hosts ChurchandCulture.org; and a professor of theology and culture at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he served as their fourth president. James writes what I have been thinking...

"I don't know what to pray. I'm not sure, right now, I know how to pray. I'm not even sure I want to pray, but I know I need to. I'm just a mess." Ever felt that way? We all have. Whether we are facing the stark nature of our depravity, the aftermath of sinful choices, devastation caused by grief, the crushing weight of setback or the sense of just being overwhelmed,

... we can be so spiritually depleted, or spiritually numb, that the thought of prayer is simply too much. We don't know what to say, how to feel, what can break through the complexity of our feelings. We know we need to pray but have little spiritual or emotional strength to even begin.

That's when you should say the Jesus prayer, one of the most ancient of all prayers, and it is only one sentence: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Its origin is unclear. Aspects of meditative prayer such as the Jesus prayer date back to at least the time of the ancient monks of the Egyptian desert as seen in the writings of Evagrius Ponticus (d. 339). "The standard form of the Jesus prayer," writes Kallistos Ware, "is first found in the Life of Abba Phelmon. He was an Egyptian monk, living... in the sixth century." John Climacus, in the seventh century, was the first Greek writer to refer to it with the phrase "Jesus Prayer." It is clearly scriptural in origin. "Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 2:6-11), "Son of God" (Luke 1:31-35), "have mercy on me" (Luke 18:9-14). The Orthodox Church took the prayer and developed its use for prayer and meditation. Ware notes that a Jesus-centered spirituality gradually developed around its use, in which four main elements can be distinguished: Devotion to the Holy Name "Jesus," which is felt to act in a semi-sacramental way as a source of power and grace. The appeal for divine mercy, accompanied by a keen sense of compunction and inward grief. The discipline of frequent repetition. The quest for the inner silence of stillness; that is to say, for imageless, non-discursive prayer. This may be more than you care to know or, even more likely, more than you care to attempt to contemplate while praying. The simpler point is that there are times when you have nothing left to breathe out toward God except these few words. And throughout history, even the brevity of the Jesus prayer is sometimes reduced to simply praying, "Jesus, have mercy" or even "Jesus."

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Thank you James for articulating what I (and many of us may be feeling and thinking in these times. When all we can pray over and over is, "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Perhaps that's all we need to pray as well.

Prayerfully, Pastor Mitch

Bazaar Update for 2021

There will not be a traditional bazaar this advent season however, our "Convenor of Home Goodies", Ann Lambie has undertaken the preparation of jams/jellies and relishes again this year. There will be an opportunity to support our bazaar fund in two ways:

1. You can buy some of these preservers for your Christmas stocking stuffers, price will be \$ 5.00 per jar or 5 for \$20.. There is a group who will deliver them to you, or you can pick them up at the church office.
- 2 You can donate to the bazaar fund and we will deliver preserves to the Mustard Seed food bank.



Stay tuned int he coming weeks for ordering information and a list of available preserves. Speak to David McLean for more info.

Advent Activity from the PCC

The Presbyterian church in Canada has put out a resource for people to join in "Las Posadas"—normally celebrated in Latin America from December 16–24. "Posada" means "refuge" or "inn" in Spanish, and the festival commemorates Mary and Joseph's difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. This tradition has been adapted by churches across North America as part of Advent observations.

The version of "Los Posadas" that was created by the Rev. Charmila Ireland is a simplified celebration using figurines of Jesus and Mary that travelled between the homes of congregants. This resource provides steps for friends to follow to celebrate the tradition of "Los Posadas" this year.

[Click here](#) to learn more and download the resource

Reservations for Sunday

We are still asking for congregants to register for attendance at the Sunday service. We know that many have stopped pre-registering. However, as more people attend (and we get closer to reaching our capacity of 70 attendees) we need your help to let us know if you'll be there in-person on Sunday. Please help us to prepare for worship by [clicking here](#) for the form to register for Sunday.

*Reminder:
Church offices will
be closed Nov. 11*



**WE PRAY FOR FARMERS IN MALAWI AND
GIVE THANKS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE
FARMING PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE
CHURCH THROUGH PRESBYTERIAN
WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT THAT
HELP THEIR CROPS FLOURISH.**

 The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Read From Your Bible This Week

- 1 Samuel 1:4–20
- 1 Samuel 2:1–10
- Hebrews 10:11–14, (15–18), 19–25
- Mark 13:1–8

