

PRAYER VIGIL
Diocese of Rupert's Land
November 28 - November 29, 2020
During the time of COVID-19 Pandemic
EVE OF THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Suggestions for prayer:

Jesus said, "Watch and pray". The dictionary affirms vigil is "watchfulness" and scripture confirms that power is released through concerted prayer. We invite clergy and parishes into a time of prayer focusing on:

- seeking God's protection as we battle this COVID-19 virus
- for God's wisdom for all those developing a vaccine
- for God's wisdom for our political and medical leaders, federally and provincially, giving direction in how we respond to the risks
- for protection and steadfastness for the medical staff as they put their health at risk to provide care and comfort to patients with the virus
- for the medical system that there be sufficient staff, facilities, equipment and supplies to deal with patients in hospital
- for our teachers and administration, superintendants and school boards as they work so hard at providing a safe environment for our students to learn and have fun
- for each and every one of us that we care for our neighbour and be watchful in how we can be Jesus' hands, ears and eyes and voice to bring comfort and support to those who suffer in our community and around the world
- for wisdom for all people, including ourselves, as each of us make decisions in how we respond to COVID-19 restrictions

Encouragement from Scripture:

We encourage you to look up the following passages and read the context in which these words were shared. What is happening? Who are the words directed to? Why are they being said?

Matthew 17:21: Jesus said, "For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 18:20: For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Matthew 11:28-30: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Acts 1:14: All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Ephesians 6:18-19: Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

There are many more passages from scripture that encourage us to have faith and persevere. As part of your vigil do your own research. Many Bibles have subject guides or word searches at the back for words like, 'faith' and 'prayer' or use google. God will guide you.

A Guide to Sitting with God

Wait on the Lord:

- Spend the first few minutes settling down – mentally laying aside the activities and concerns of the day to spend this time in the presence of God and Jesus Christ. You may want to light a candle.
- Read Psalm 139. Meditate on the possibility of being anywhere in the universe where God is not. Realize that God is already listening and waiting for you.

Adoration for God and God's love:

- Read a psalm of praise (23, 34, 95, 100, 150 and more). Let these psalms become prayers of adoration coming from your heart. We want to be told how much we are loved, and so does God. Read a canticle from the prayer book.

Thanksgiving for all the blessings of life:

- Take time to give thanks to Jesus for his love, for family, friends, health, home, nature, and more.
- Give thanks for our salvation through the love and grace of Jesus Christ.
- Give thanks for your parish and diocese and the leadership.

Confession:

- Take some time to recall times when you may have said or done things that hurt others, or chose not to take action or say something and later wished you had.
"I confess to you Almighty God, that I have sinned in thought, word and deed, in things done and left undone, and especially..... For these and all others sin that separates me from you and my neighbour, I am truly sorry. Forgive me. With your help I shall amend my life through Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. Amen."

Intercession:

- We focus our prayers on the COVID-19 Pandemic recalling people and situations in the world, in Canada, in Manitoba, in our city/town, in our community/parish, in our family.

A Spiritual Guide:

Julian of Norwich lived in the late 14th and early 15th Centuries during a Pandemic, often referred to as "The Plague". She lived alone in a small enclosure as an anchoress attached to a church and wrote at length about the visions she received during a time when she was seriously ill. Her words are particularly apt in this time of Pandemic:

In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss.

In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving.

You are our mother, brother, and Saviour.

In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvellous and plenteous grace.

You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us.

You are our maker, our lover, our keeper.

Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. Amen.

You might wish to read a recent article about Julian from the Anglican Journal at

<https://www.anglicanjournal.com/julian-of-norwich-a-theologian-for-ourtime/?fbclid=IwAR0NEkrWiKcAnsil3AnKB6E6LJhFghjfeamyHHqi4xfj2Te2Roz10NX-0A>

For Peace in Anxiety During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Loving God, we come to you full of anxiety about what may happen in the coming days and weeks. Shower us with the peace Jesus promised to his disciples, and make us into steady pillars for those around us. In this time of uncertainty and epidemic, wake us up to the reminder that we are not alone. Even as we are asked to keep our distance from others, help us to find ways to reach out to those who need our support. We pray especially for those whose incomes and livelihoods are threatened. For the children who will miss meals due to school closures. For those already isolated, lonely and scared. Loving God, give them your peace, and through our hands ensure they have what they need. Sustain, strengthen and protect all caregivers. Bless them as they offer compassionate care and show selfless courage in the face of risk. Remind us, each time we wash our hands, that in our baptism you call us to let go of our fears and live in joy, peace, and hope. Amen.

Nourished Through Prayer by Win Mizon, Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

The Reverend Nils Chittenden, Rector of St. Stephen's Church in Armonk, New York, shared a beautiful prayer from the Anglican Church of South Africa for those who are unable to physically receive communion. He writes, "In apartheid South Africa, many prisoners were denied the sacraments and had to find other ways of taking Spiritual Communion". This prayer found its way into the 1989 Anglican Church of South Africa Prayer Book as a help to others who could not receive.

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer but hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes when, with your saints, I may praise you forever.
Amen.

One of Teresa's of Avalon (an ancient mystic) most famous teachings is a poem known as "Teresa's Bookmark" that was found in her own prayer book after her death:

Let nothing disturb you.
Let nothing upset you.
Everything changes.
God alone is unchanging.
With patience all things are possible.
Whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone is enough.

I hope Teresa's words will bring you some comfort in this challenging time. Simple and powerful!

I also find Psalm 46 especially encouraging:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult... 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

The Lord bless us and keep us, the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us, the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us peace. Amen!