



GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Immanuel"
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024 - DAY 8

God with Us: In Peace/Shalom

Suggested Bible Reading: Mathew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Prayer

By Madeline Witvliet, a member of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is in her third year at Calvin University, studying English.

Merciful God,

Thank you for your gentleness, kindness, mercy, and love. You are faithful to your children. You lead us on the path of righteousness. Your goodness transcends our understanding. For that we praise You.

We admit that we have done wrong. We have sinned against you and your people. We have failed to show love to you, ourselves, and our neighbors. We have been selfish, envious, and prideful. Please forgive us for all the ways we fall short.

We are weary and weighed down by the injustice in the news, the trials of our daily lives, and our anxious thoughts. We long to see universal justice and peace on this earth. We long for a break from our daily obligations. We long for our minds to be put to rest.

We repent for every time we have turned to earthly things to ease our burdens. We know that we can only find perfect peace and true rest in you. Thank you for walking alongside us. Thank you for carrying our burdens, our sin, and our shame. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, so that we might be saved.

God, open our hearts so that we may be closer to you. Help us to learn from your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to love others as you love us. Help us to live in a way that is pleasing to you so that all may see your goodness.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- In what ways do you long to find rest from the worries and anxious thoughts of each day?
- Jesus says, "I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Reflect on your longing for that lighter burden of Jesus rather than the heavy burdens you carry. Ask God to meet you in that struggle.



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MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024 - DAY 9

God With Us: In Anxiety

Suggested Bible Reading: Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Prayer

By Aaliyah Verhoef, a 17-year-old high school student and member at River Park CRC, Calgary, Alberta

Our Father in heaven,
Thank you. Thank you for embracing us in our anxiety and walking with us in times of difficulty. You are truly the Rock on which we can build our strong foundation. Thank you for providing us with our daily bread and keeping us safe.

God, we want to say we are sorry. We are sorry for the damage that we cause in this world, to your creation, and to each other. We are sorry for the ways in which we sin and fall short. Thank you for your "never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love."

Lord, we ask for support in difficult times and guidance in difficult conversations. Please continue to walk alongside us and show us the best way as we attempt to discern the right path.

God, help us to open our hearts to your will. We ask, Lord, that you take away our anxieties, our stresses, our fears, and our hurts and fill the spaces left behind with your divine love and patience.

Father, help us each to remember that we are your children, made in your image. Help us to submit ourselves to you and let your will be done.

In your glorious name, Amen.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- How can becoming more thankful to God for all he has provided shift our perspective on being anxious?
- Bringing our prayer and petitions, with thanksgiving, before God requires honesty. What do you need to be honest about before God that is causing you to worry and be anxious?



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TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024 - DAY 10

God With Us: In Anxiety

Suggested Bible Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Prayer

By Amie Spriensma, who attends Rusk CRC and lives, works, and worships in Allendale, Michigan. She is a daughter, sister, auntie, friend, and dog-lover. Aside from spending time with her family and friends, she likes to read, color, and ride her Terra-Trike.

Lord our God,

We praise you and thank you today as our Savior and Sustainer. We acknowledge you as the giver of our life and breath. You know when we sit; you know when we rise.

Help us be attentive to the needs of the people we serve among. Enable us to serve them well not because we have to but because we want to. Help us to love you and serve you with all that we are and have. We want to live, love, and work according to your will.

Free us from the cares and anxieties we have in this life as we live in humble, grateful dependence on you. We cannot add one hour to our lives by worrying about things and situations we cannot change. Thank you for your gracious providence, which keeps us and leads us moment by moment.

As we cast all our burdens before you, we come in the confidence that you will hear us, guide us, and meet our needs. You are our loving shepherd; we are your servant-hearted sheep. As we listen for your voice, read your Word, and heed your Spirit,

you make known to us the path of life. Thank you so much for the joy and freedom we find in knowing you. We look forward to spending our eternal forever in your worthy glorious presence.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- God's mighty hand will lift us up in due time. How does that truth help us to face the uncertainties of day-to-day living?
- We have confidence that God will hear us, guide us, and meet our needs. Often that does not look like what we envision it to be. Spend a few moments asking God to give you eyes to see God's provision as he provides it, rather than how you may want it.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024 - DAY 11

God With Us: In Anxiety

Suggested Bible Reading: Proverbs 12:25

Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

Prayer

By Daniel Budilaksono, who helps lead ReFrame Ministries' Indonesian Ministry in Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian

Bapa Surgawi,
Engkau senantiasa ada bersama-sama dengan kami.
Engkau mengerti pikiran kami.
Engkau memahami kedalaman hati kami.
Engkau mengetahui setiap tingkah langkah kami, bahkan sebelum kami melakukannya,
karena Engkaulah Allah yang menciptakan kami.
Engkaulah Tuhan, Penguasa hidup kami.
Tidak ada satu pun bagian hidup kami yang ada di luar kendali-Mu, semuanya Kaurengkuh di dalam kuasa-Mu yang penuh kasih.
Namun demikian,
kami sering tidak menyadari kehadiran-Mu.
Kami lupa bahwa Engkaulah Sang Imanuel – Allah yang menyertai kami.
Kami membiarkan keraguan memasuki pikiran kami,
kecemasan menguasai hati kami,
dan kekhawatiran menentukan tindakan kami,
sehingga beban hidup menjadi semakin terasa berat menekan,
dan kami kehilangan kegembiraan dan sukacita.

Ampuni kami, Tuhan.
Ya Yesus Anak Allah,
kami bersimpuh di hadirat-Mu, menantikan firman-Mu,
firman yang menghidupkan, menyegarkan, dan memulihkan.
Firman-Mu menghapus keraguan kami,
melenyapkan kecemasan kami,
dan menyingkirkan kekhawatiran kami.
Angkatlah beban yang menindih kami,
sehingga kami dapat kembali tegak berdiri,
bergembira dan bersukacita dalam Engkau.
O Roh Kudus,
tolong kami agar dapat menghayati penyertaan-Mu dalam hidup kami,
dan beri kami kekuatan untuk menyatakan kehadiran-Mu bagi dunia.
Taruhlah hikmat-Mu dalam pikiran, perkataan dan perbuatan kami,
sehingga kami dapat memberi keyakinan kepada yang ragu,
ketenangan kepada yang cemas,
dan damai sejahtera kepada yang khawatir.
Kiranya melalui kami banyak orang disegarkan dan dipulihkan.
Dalam nama Bapa, Anak dan Roh Kudus. Amin.

English

Heavenly Father,
You are always with us.
You understand our thoughts.
You know the depth of our hearts.
You know our every move, even before we make it,
for you are the God who created us.
You are the Lord, the Master of our lives.
No part of our lives is beyond your control,
You embrace everything in your loving power.
Yet
we are often unaware of your presence.
We forget that you are Immanuel – “God with us.”
We allow doubt to enter our minds,
anxiety to rule our hearts,
and worry to dictate our actions
so that the burdens of life become more and more pressing
and we lose our joy and happiness.
Forgive us, Lord.

O Jesus, Son of God,
we kneel before you and wait for your Word,
a Word that revives, refreshes, and restores.
Your Word removes our doubts,
banishes our anxieties,
and takes away our worries.
Lift the burden that weighs us down
so that we can stand tall again,
rejoicing and delighting in you.
O Holy Spirit,
help us to live out your presence in our lives,
and give us the strength to proclaim your presence to the world.
Put your wisdom into our thoughts, words, and actions,
that we may give confidence to the doubtful,
calm to the anxious,
and peace to the worried.
May many people be refreshed and restored through us
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- “Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.”
- God’s Word revives, refreshes, and restores. What verse can you carry with you today that will do this for you? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to the verse God wants to use to revive, refresh, and restore you today.



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THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024 - DAY 12

God With Us: In Trust

Suggested Bible Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-8

This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the LORD. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Prayer

By Laura Dieleman, a member of Grace Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ontario, who enjoys serving as a youth leader

Dear heavenly Father,
We come to you with hearts filled with thankfulness for your love and faithfulness. When we have times of doubt, thank you for graciously reminding us that we are not in control and to turn our eyes to you for strength.

In a world filled with uncertainty and doubt, we find our refuge in your unchanging promises and perfect plans. You are our rock and our salvation, our firm foundation in the midst of life's storms.

Give us the courage to not lean on our own understanding but to trust in your infinite wisdom in all areas of our lives, including our relationships, our families, our careers, our finances, our safety, and our futures.

May we find peace in the knowledge that you hold our future in your hands and that your plans for us are always good.

In times of trial, may our trust in you remain unwavering, knowing that you are always with us, walking beside us every step of the way. Strengthen our hearts, and help us to trust in your perfect timing and providence.

As we walk through life, may our trust in you be seen by others around us as a testimony of your goodness and grace to all those near us. May others see your faithfulness reflected in our lives and be drawn closer to you.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- Jeremiah gives the picture that trusting God brings abundance. In what ways have you experienced God's abundance when you trusted him in your life?
- How has your trusting God in moments of uncertainty, or in times of following God's leading, been a testimony of God's goodness and grace?



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FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024 - DAY 13

God With Us: In Trust

Suggested Bible Reading: Psalm 34:8–11

Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Prayer

By Bethany Besteman, worship coordinator at Silver Spring (Md.) CRC. She also serves as an editor for the Reformed Worship quarterly journal.

Writer's note

What struck me as I was reading this psalm was how it felt very much like a person giving a testimony—someone who wanted to share what God had done in their life and how they had seen God at work. The praise of God by the community is spurred on by the testimony of the individual who shares God's work. As you sing (or read) the psalm text below, spend a few moments reflecting on where you have seen God's hand at work in your own life today.

Psalm 34

Tune: Arise (Southern Harmony) or Servant Song (Will You Let Me Be Your Servant)
8.7.8.7

Come, my children, to the table;
gather round from near and far.

Taste and see what God is doing;
know the grace no sin can mar.

I will tell you of his goodness;
let afflicted, downcast hear:
How out of the depths he lifted
up his servant, drew me near.

Round about the ones who fear him
God's wide arms protect and shield.
Radiant sunlight falls on faces
from their shame and troubles healed.

Come, my children, listen to me:
On the righteous shine God's eyes.
Turn from evil, seek, pursue peace;
from your lips God's praises rise.

We will taste the life God offers;
we will glorify his name!
From our sins and sorrows woven,
joyful hope lives free from shame.

Prayer

God, when we come together, when we gather, we hear again the work you do among us. We are invited through our fellowship with each other to taste the life you offer us. When your children testify to your goodness, to the flavor and wholesomeness of the food you offer, it makes each of us more eager to join the feast. We praise you for the work being done in the lives of our brothers and sisters. Make us eager to spread the news of how wonderful life is when lived in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- Spend a few moments reflecting on where you have seen God's hand at work in your own life today.
- Take a few moments today—in person, through a phone call, email, chat, or some other way—and ask a brother or sister in Christ about the work God is doing in their life today.



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SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024 - DAY 14

God With Us: In Trust

Suggested Bible Reading: Jeremiah 17:7-8

"Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit."

Prayer

By Amelie Froehlich, a second-year bachelor of commerce and minor in music student at The King's University in Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Lord,

As we reach the time leading up to synod, let us reflect on these words. Help us to trust in you completely, bringing all of our worldly troubles to you, Lord, and ensuring we know that they are not ours alone to bear. Let us confide in you, Lord, every thought and action, as you know everything we have done and will do. Give us confidence in your Word, that we may know when you are speaking and how to discern your Word. Take away all fear for what will come, and help us to trust that you will take care of us. Let us know that like a tree planted by the water, our source of comfort in you is always close. Help us to never fear for a year of drought because we know that in you we will never thirst. Just as with a tree planted by the water, may our thirst and hunger for you never run dry. And as the leaves stay ever green, let our faith in you stay ever present and unwavering. In times of uncertainty teach

us to fully devote ourselves to you, and cast away all our fears. Lord, let us surrender our anxious thoughts and worries to you, clearly knowing that you will provide for us eternally.

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- Our confidence can be in God. Where do you need to grow in confidence that this world belongs to God and will be sustained by his gracious hand?
- Where can you testify that trusting in God has brought you to streams of living water?