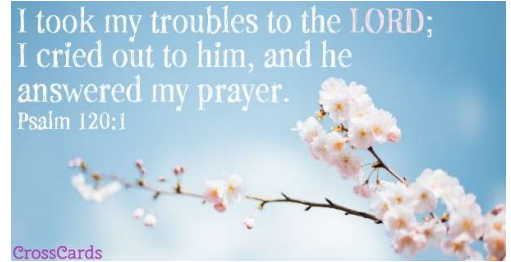




**ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH  
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION  
BASED ON PSALM 120  
FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**



**PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SLANDERERS**

- <sup>1</sup> In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me:  
<sup>2</sup> “Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.”  
<sup>3</sup> What shall be given to you? And what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue?  
<sup>4</sup> A warrior’s sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree!  
<sup>5</sup> Woe is me, that I am an alien in Meshech, that I must live among the tents of Kedar.  
<sup>6</sup> Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace.  
<sup>7</sup> I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.

**PRAYER**

Holy One, I call on you today as one who is distressed by world events that have unfolded before me about which I can do nought but call on Your goodness, compassion and healing. The words of the Psalmist give me confidence that I will be delivered from my own wrongdoing, and the wrongs which cause me great distress and harm. Just as a quivering arrow finds its prey, untrue and unkind words find their prey. Lord, help me to find the peaceful and calm spaces where I can be relieved of the stresses of life and rest in palm of Your loving embrace where war and violence can’t exist. Amen

**PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS AND PRAISE**

- Thank you for counsellors, friends who are listeners, doctors, nurses
- Thank you for the peaceful moments
- Thank you for the moments of joyful pleasure to share with others
- Thank you for those who are truthful, thank you for being the truth
- Praises to You Lord, for poetry
- Praises to You Lord, for yearning for peace
- Praises to You Lord, for a place where I can dwell and be thoughtful
- Praises to You Lord, for always telling the truth even if I find it uncomfortable.

**PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION**

- Forgive me Lord, when my attitude is one of conflict with others
- Forgive me Lord, for using words in a hurtful way to those I say I love
- Forgive me Lord, when the hot coal of temper overtakes my humility
- Forgive me Lord, for the times when I’m dishonest with myself and with You.

## **WORDS OF GRACE**

Our gracious God knows our contrite heart which seeks forgiveness. Jesus has given us the mercy and grace we seek. Live peacefully amongst your friends and with Christ forgiven once more. Amen.

## **REFLECTION Psalm 120 (a song of ascents)**

Some have thought that the Hebrew for the word ‘ascents’ refers to stairs leading to the temple, hence a song of the stairs, and to be used in the temple. Many believe that the psalm refers to the annual religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which brought the worshipers into Jerusalem singing to Mount Zion.

Crying out to God in our times of distress is more common than anyone can imagine. On first reading this psalm it doesn’t appear that we could find much encouragement or something positive within it. However, there is both. This psalm is a heartfelt cry for deliverance, depicting the struggle and longing for peace in the world much the same as today, a world filled with violence, conflict, lies and deceit. Our psalm encapsulates the emotion of someone who finds themselves in the midst of conflict, and with that is offering us deep insights into our relational experience with God.

From the outset we hear the plea for help which doesn’t fall on deaf ears but is heard. This opening reinforces our belief that God isn’t distant from us, but right with us in the midst of our struggles. It’s a reminder that in times of trouble, we aren’t alone; God’s divine presence is with us listening to us and responding to our call on God. Our prayerful acknowledgement continues to nurture our hope that we can always trust God to hear us and turn to God as a refuge when life is overwhelming.

What we have is a contrast of the peace he desires with the environment that surrounds him, filled with ‘lying lips’ and ‘a deceitful tongue.’ This confronting imagery invites reflection on the nature of the world we navigate on a daily basis. It speaks of the challenges of living in a society where the truth depends on who’s speaking, who’s listening and who’s interpreting what is heard. Yet within this turmoil, there’s an underlying message of resilience. The writer of this psalm’s recognition of the hostility around them serves as a motivator to actively seek peace and make no assumptions. Our short psalm has within it a stark warning about the consequences of deceitful behaviour, emphasising the ensuing turmoil that comes from dishonesty and a lack of authentic integrity. He just longs for peace not just for himself, he’s almost craving for a peaceful community to live in that isn’t tearing itself apart by falsehood and division. This fully demonstrates to all of us that the pursuit of truth is vital for the well-being of both the individual and the community we share with others.

How encouraging it is to be able to read this psalm as a transformative journey from distress to the anticipation of God’s intervention. The very act of speaking out about our fears and frustrations is an important step toward healing and resolution and a more peaceful life. It demonstrates the power of faith, encouraging us as followers of Christ to express what troubles us, our concerns for others and ourselves openly and honestly to God, which leads to a deeper sense of peace.

The psalm for today teaches us that while we face adversities from time to time, that isn’t the time to sit under the shade of a tree and do nothing. God expects us to do

something to positively help ourselves. Through the act of reaching out to God in prayer, songs of praise, engaging in fellowship with other believers, and of course the all-important time of worship, God provides us comfort and strength.

We are encouraged to be vigilant against deceitfulness in our lives and to always strive for the kind of peace that has no understanding, for ourselves as well as others in our communities. By remaining steadfast in our long-standing faith and pursuing truth, we nurture an environment where peace has a chance of blossoming amidst the many challenges we face along the way.

Amen

### **PRAYER POINTS OF INTERCESSION**

- We pray for the Holy Spirit to intercede where war and conflict in our world exists
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to intercede showering the unloved with love and the strength to find peace in their life.
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to give me/us the capacity to be resilient in times of struggles.
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us on our journey of transformation from one who is anxious to one who is content to sit still and hear where You are calling us to go.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rn9-UNer6MQ>

