



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH

APRIL 30TH 2025

PRAYERS AND REFLECTION

BASED ON PSALM 122

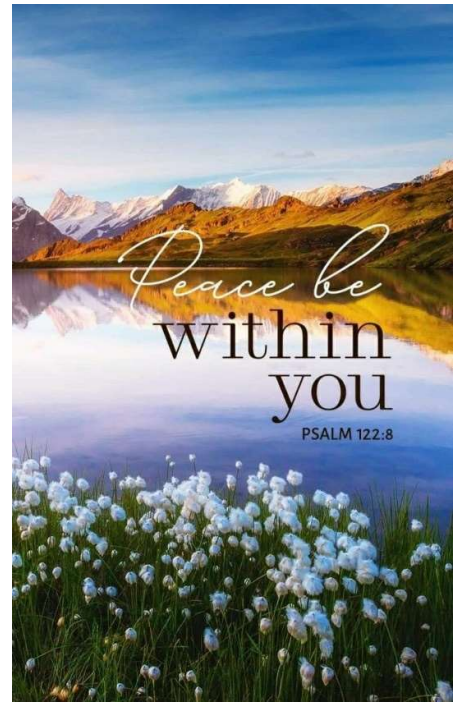
Song of Praise and Prayer for Jerusalem

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- ¹ I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”
- ² Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
- ³ Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
- ⁴ To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
- ⁵ For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.
- ⁷ Peace be within your walls
and security within your towers.”
- ⁸ For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
- ⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.







PRAYER:

Lord of everything and everyone, I call you my friend as one who is happy to enter through the gates into the place where you have called me to go. I know that it won't always be easy and there will be those who will want me to fail in the quest you have passed on to me. Rather than go down the road of making judgement calls on them, I seek to pass on your peace to them so they may prosper in your goodness as witnesses of how much you love and care for them despite their ungracious attitude towards your people.






I pray Lord, that as I sit here and reflect on what you have in store for me, that I sit peacefully in harmony with the Holy Spirit as your love goes deep into the marrow of my bones, flowing through the veins that bring life, love, faith, joy and breath into my life. In your name I pray amen.

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS AND PRAISE

-  thank you for your church where peace and fellowship in your name is experienced
-  thank you for the security of life found in the resurrection
-  thank you for seeking me out and the blessing of your grace
-  I praise you Lord for the sound of the wind, the taste of fresh water, the warmth to be found around a fire, and the freshly toiled earth, all of which remind me of the nourishment you have provided for my body, mind and soul.
-  I praise you Lord for the songs and poetry of David your servant
-  I praise you Lord for the walls of protection from the beasts of temptation who don't know nor understand your kind of peace and generosity.

PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION

-  Forgive me, when I forge ahead and mess things up
-  Forgive the people who bring dishonour and destruction of peace on your cities and nations
-  Forgive me for my arrogance and poor use of words, thoughts and deeds.

WORDS OF GRACE

God is love and it's through the shedding of Christ's blood and resurrection we know God's grace and forgiveness. Take hold of this forgiveness and live your life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

REFLECTION

In our final week of our month of Psalms we are sitting with the wonderfully fulfilling sense of peace. Psalm 122 is a beautiful expression of joy and peace reflecting our heartfelt concern for what we would like to find in our time of worship with our faith community. We can't help but be excited when we read *'I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"'* in the opening verse. When John and I are away and we are the visitors on a Sunday morning, we're excited to be part of a worshipping community even though it isn't St Ninian's. The house of the Lord is wherever the Lord's people have gathered. Having the opportunity to gather together in community in this way highlights just how important it is to experience the body of Christ as part of the much bigger picture.

The focus soon shifts us towards Jerusalem, or city of peace. Jerusalem isn't just a geographical location; it's the holiest city in Judaism and the spiritual heart of the Jewish people, with the First and Second temples located within its walls. It represents the dwelling place of God among the Israelite nation when the pilgrimage to the temple was a significant part of Jewish faith. As Christians the church serves a similar role as place where we continue to gather to worship, build our relationship with God and encourage one another in faith- these aren't trivial things to us, they're important to us.

David goes to great lengths to bring us into the mindful place of peace and security and I don't mean the locked door kind of security, but the one which encourages us to walk through the gate. Here he speaks reflectively about a desire for individual harmony as well as worshiping and enjoying harmonious fellowship within faith communities. The well-being of Jerusalem is tied to those who live in the city emphasising that spiritual health and communal peace go hand in hand. In wanting to have a greater understanding of this we need to look at how much we contribute to the peace and unity of our own faith community, recognising that we are called to be peacemakers in a world which too often is divided, allowing polarization to take control of situations. Division and polarization usually don't lead to peaceful resolutions or a harmonious community, instead it creates an attitude of them and us where unity is unclear, unfelt, and unknown leaving no place any form of humility. Not what God envisions for God's church.

David finishes with a firm reminder of the importance of praying for the peace of Jerusalem. His intercessory prayer should encourage us to lift up our faith community and its leadership in prayer, seeking not only our well-being but also for those around us. When we do this, we're acknowledging God's authority over our lives and God's creation.

God's expectation of us is to continue to intentionally develop our prayers, and connectivity to our church communities no matter where we are living in our global village and the essential role it's playing in nurturing spiritual growth, peace, and unity the wider church communities and beyond. We're encouraged to be active in our private prayers and reflection as well as our corporate Sunday worship and fellowship understanding that we are strongest when we gather together in faith, seeking the heart of God for our lives and faith communities.

INTESSORAY PRAYER based on Psalm 122

Lord,

I come before you, grateful for the gift of community and the blessing of gathering in your name. Just as David declared, *'I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"*, may my heart be filled with joy and anticipation as I approach your holy presence.

I come before you to intercede for our cities, communities, and nations. Just as Jerusalem was a place of peace and unity, I pray for our homes and neighbourhoods to be filled with your peace. Let harmony prevail, and may I be an instrument of your love, determined to create a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Grant wisdom to our leaders, guide our decision-makers, and inspire them to act justly and righteously. May they work towards the betterment of all people, nurturing unity and care for everyone.

Jesus, I lift up to you now those who are struggling in our communities across the world: in Australia, the UK, USA, Israel, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, the Congo, Somalia, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Palestine, and all other nations. I ask that your light shines upon them, bring hope

and restoration. Help me, Lord, to recognise the needs around me and empower me to be proactive in reaching out with compassion and kindness.

Holy Spirit instill in me a deep desire to pray for the peace of our cities, take away the unrest and violence, and may I always seek your Holy Presence to be in me as I witness your goodwill among my neighbours. I trust in your promises and ask for your mercy to hear my prayer. In the name and Spirit of Christ, amen.

A beautiful song '**Peace Joy Love**'

by Jim Brickman, Haley and Michaels, Mat and Savanna Shar FT. Ukrainian Chorus Dumka NY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcJURx72wLU>

