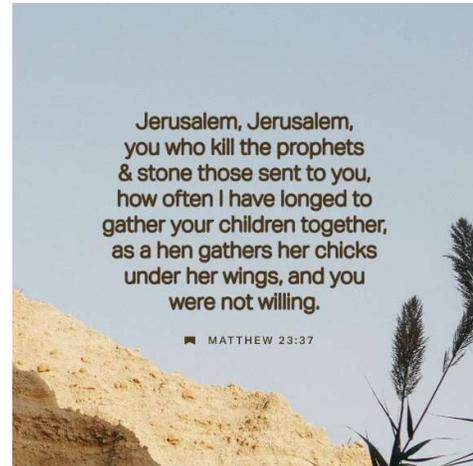




**ST NINIAN'S UNITING  
CHURCH  
NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup> 2025  
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION**



**BASED ON MATTHEW 23:37-24:14**

**Jesus' Love for Jerusalem**

<sup>37</sup> “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! <sup>38</sup> And so your Temple will be abandoned and empty. <sup>39</sup> From now on, I tell you, you will never see me again until you say, ‘God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

**Jesus Speaks of the Destruction of the Temple**

<sup>24</sup> <sup>1</sup> Jesus left and was going away from the Temple when his disciples came to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup> “Yes,” he said, “you may well look at all these. I tell you this: not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.”

**Troubles and Persecutions**

<sup>3</sup> As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him in private. “Tell us when all this will be,” they asked, “and what will happen to show that it is the time for your coming and the end of the age.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “Watch out, and do not let anyone fool you. <sup>5</sup> Many men, claiming to speak for me, will come and say, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will fool many people. <sup>6</sup> You are going to hear the noise of battles close by and the news of battles far away; but do not be troubled. Such things must happen, but they do not mean that the end has come. <sup>7</sup> Countries will fight each other; kingdoms will attack one another. There will be famines and earthquakes everywhere. <sup>8</sup> All these things are like the first pains of childbirth.

<sup>9</sup> “Then you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and be put to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. <sup>10</sup> Many will give up their faith at that time; they will betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then

many false prophets will appear and fool many people. <sup>12</sup>Such will be the spread of evil that many people's love will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But whoever holds out to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup>And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all people; and then the end will come.

## **QUIET TIME IN PRAYER**

Creator God, I have come to you today to reflect on the heartache of Jerusalem and the call to watch and be alert. As I seek your wisdom in light of your disciple Matthew, open my heart to recognise the signs of my own time. Help me to endure the challenges I face and to remain steadfast in my faith. may I stand as a witness of your love and truth, lifting others up in service and worship. I pray for your guidance, to empower me as I share the hope of Christ with a world in great need. In Jesus' name I pray amen.

## **PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS AND PRAISE**

- Thanks and praise to you, Lord, for your deep love and compassion in your longing for Jerusalem. Thanks for your persistent desire to gather all your people under your wings and for your mercy for our rebellious behaviour.
- Thanks and praise to you, Lord, for the promise that those of us who endure right to the end will know eternity and for your empowerment to remain faithful and steadfast in our commitment to you.
- Thanks and praise to you, Lord, for the hope of your return and the establishment of your kingdom. For the signs that remind us to remain alert and faithful, and for the call to share your good news of the gospel with others as we await for your return.

## **PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION**

- Lord, I am sorry for the times when I am indifferent to your gift of the Holy Spirit's call to love and serve those around me.
- Lord, I am sorry when I'm complacent in my faith, failing to remain alert to the signs of the times. Renew my spirit and reawaken me to the Gospel message.

- Lord, I am sorry when my fears and doubts rise above my strength of faith.

## **WORDS OF GRACE**

In asking your forgiveness I may know cleansing, renewal and a dislike of doing things against you. Jesus says when we confess our wrongdoing with an attitude to be sorry, we are forgiven. In Christ you are forgiven, thanks be to God, amen

## **REFLECTION**

Matthew compassionately speaks to us with a warning to be vigilant. In our reading today Jesus laments over Jerusalem, expressing his yearning to gather the wayward people as a hen gathers her chicks. From this image we can see God's nurturing love and the pain of rejection by those whom Jesus longs to protect. This image reminds of our own tendency to stray away from God's guidance, often placing what we desire the most over our relationship with God.

As Jesus speaks of the impending destruction of the temple and the harsh realities that will accompany the end times, he emphasises the importance of being alert and well prepared. These words serve as both a warning and an encouragement. They challenge us to reflect on the choices we make in the face of uncertainty and adversity. Are we spiritually awake, prepared to respond to the difficulties that will come our way, or do we remain complacent, lulled into apathy by the noise of everyday life?

The call to be resilient and endure until the end resonates with us today. In a world rife with chaos, where faith is tested daily, we are reminded that perseverance is a mark of true discipleship. God's promise of everlasting life to those who don't let go of their faith offers hope when all else seems lost to us.

Matthew invites us to involve ourselves in the practice of self-examination. Are we responding to God's call with open hearts? Are we actively living out our faith, remaining vigilant against complacency? As we continue to reflect on Matthew's words may embrace our calling to be light in the world, sharing the hope and love of Christ, especially in times of uncertainty. May we all

take the time to intentionally cultivate a spirit of alertness, resilient and ready to endure and thrive in our journey of faith.

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

Holy One, I pray for those who are weary and burdened, like Jerusalem, have turned away from your love. I pray for hearts to be softened, that they may see your longing for them and turn their faces toward you. In times of challenge and struggles, grant strength and endurance to those who have chosen the path to the Kingdom of heaven that we may all stand firm in our faith and be beacons of hope. Help us to be alert and diligent, sharing your truth and love with a world in need of your hope, love and grace. May your spirit guide and empower us as we seek to bring others to your saving grace. Amen

### **IN THE SHADOWS OF JERUSALEM    ©SV 2025**

In the shadowed streets of Jerusalem's heart,  
A voice of lament, his tears play a part.  
"How often I've yearned to gather you near,  
Like a hen with her chicks, to banish your fear."

Yet rejection resounds, as hearts turn away,  
The warnings ignored, like night turns to day.  
Destruction is coming, his words echo clear,  
A call to be watchful, for the end may be near.

In trials and troubles, when faith feels so frail,  
Stand firm in the promise, let hope prevail.  
For those who endure, their salvation is sure,  
In Christ, our Redeemer, our hearts will endure.

So, awaken your spirit, keep watch for the sign,  
For in every hardship, his grace will align.  
Proclaiming his love, let our voices resound,  
In the kingdom of Heaven, our true peace is found.