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NORTHEAST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

50 DAYS



cover painting by Dusti Jones

INTRODUCTION

King Jesus said,

*“The time has come! The Kingdom of God has come near.
Repent and believe the Good News!” (Mark 1:5)*

This tool is designed to assist us as a church to do just that—to live the way of the Kingdom. It is our hope and prayer during this 50 day season that we would draw closer to God as we engage in a life of continually repenting and believing the Good News of the King and His Kingdom.

There are two tracks within this tool. Both tracks are aimed at moving us toward knowing and following Jesus more.

TRACK ONE :: FULL • This track contains a helpful reading guide, questions to consider, and some practical actions steps that will help us know and follow Jesus more.

TRACK TWO :: FAMILY • This track is for families to use to seek God and to grow together.

Regardless of which track you follow, may you hear with fresh ears, may your heart be pierced, and may you faithfully trust Messiah Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Yield your life to God's work and experience the Good News in all of its fullness.

As a result, may Fort Wayne and the nations sing for joy!

To the glory of God.

The following prayer is going to be our common prayer throughout this 50 Day series.

As you look at each week below, you will find a part that says, "Pray the Common Prayer."

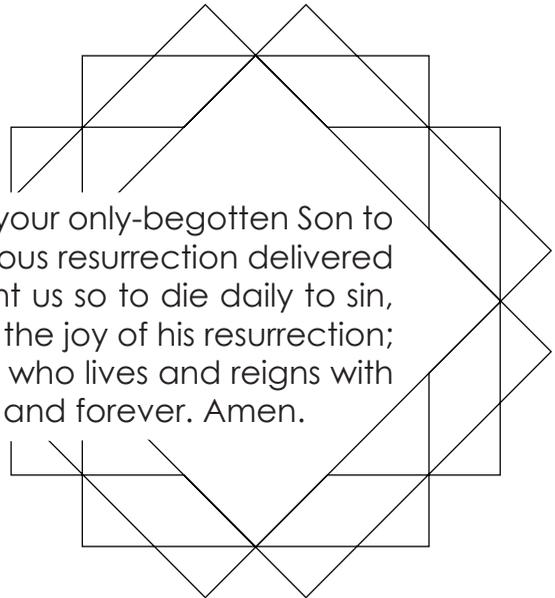
This prayer is intended to be prayed individually and with others throughout the weeks.

May God's Spirit move upon our hearts.

COMMON PRAYER

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

[Book of Common Prayer, Easter Vigil, p. 285]



WEEK 1

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 1—3

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Meditation: “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15)

MONDAY :: READ MARK 1:1-15

How has “repentance” been defined through the teaching at Northeast? How does that picture help us as we try to prepare the way for Jesus to meet those around us?

What specifically is the good news that Jesus proclaims as he moves from town to town?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 1:16-28

How is Jesus’ authority displayed in these verses (there are two main instances here)? How are they similar and how are they different?

Describe the way in which Jesus called His followers.

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 1:29-2:12

What was it about Jesus that drew people to him? What was it that drew you to him?

How was Jesus holistic in His care of people?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 2:13-28

What three controversial issues/scenarios arise in this portion of Scripture? In seeing how Jesus responds/handles these situations, what can we learn about Him?

In what ways might some of your views on things interfere with what Jesus is trying to teach you?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 3:1-12

In verse 5, it says that Jesus was “deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts”—let that sink in a minute. Are there any ways you have been stubborn of heart today or this week?

How does v. 11 connect with what was mentioned in chapter 1? What might it suggest that the unclean spirits acknowledged Jesus with such specific titles?



SATURDAY:: READ MARK 3:13-35

What can we learn about evil and the kingdom of darkness from this section of the Gospel? It seems Jesus' "time management" is being addressed here. How does Jesus define family? Why does it matter and what does it mean for us as we manage our time.

LIVE IT

When confessing sin to God, be specific. Picture actually turning from one position to another. Envision an actual change of course. When you confess with other believers or listen to another's sin struggle, go deeper than "I'm sorry." Confess the wrong direction and actually name the new direction, the right way. As a part of moving on from a place of sin or unbelief, speak and live out a right belief about Jesus.

Jesus was clearly intentional about who He put around Him for discipleship. Are you around the kind of people that heighten your creativity and passion to follow Jesus? Do the people you spend the most time with inspire you in the Kingdom way? Who can you pursue (this week!) in order to disciple and encourage them in the Good News of the Kingdom.

Share with at least one other person this week about an area of your life in which God is calling you to repent and believe the Good News. Be specific as you vulnerably share.

track two :: family

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 1—3 over the days of the week

Memory / Meditation: "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15; if you have young children, come up with motions to go with the passage. It will help!)

Action: Describe to your children what "repent" means. Have them walk in one direction, and then turn them toward the other direction. Show them that repentance means to turn around. Share areas of where you have had to turn around (or perhaps are in the process of turning from even now). Then ask them if there are any ways in their life they might need to turn around. Pray with them about this.

WEEK 2

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 4 - 5

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Meditation: "Then Jesus said, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'" (Mark 4:9)

MONDAY :: READ MARK 4:1-25

What soil reflects your heart? What did the good soil produce?

What changes do you desire for God to make in your heart?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 4:26-34

What do these parables teach us about the Kingdom of God?

Why and how was Jesus' teaching in parables effective for his listeners?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 4:35-41

Where was Jesus when the storm arose?

How can you face "storms" in life with faith as opposed to fear? What practices can you do to foster this response?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 5:1-20

After Jesus healed the man with evil spirits, what was the response of the people (v. 17)?

How do you respond to the presence of the Lord?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 5:21-34

What did the woman do to evidence her faith in Jesus?

From what in your life do you need healing?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 5:21-43

How was the healing of the girl different from the healing of the woman?

What can you do to evidence your faith in Jesus ability to intervene in your life?



LIVE IT

Hearing God's word and accepting it creates good soil that produces a crop for God's Kingdom. Throughout the week (and beyond), begin to implement small things in your life that will provide "kingdom nutrients" to enrich your heart toward God's Spirit at work within you. For example, look for ways to bless those around you (encouraging words, perhaps, or doing a good deed for someone in need).

Spend some time considering where fear prohibits you from trusting Jesus. This can be done in solitude and/or with trusted friends. Confess the fear(s). Ask the Lord to remove it, and replace it with confidence in Him and his promises.

track two :: family

Try picking a regular time for the following (e.g., in the morning or in the evening before bed).

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 4—5 over the days of the week

Memory / Meditation: "Then Jesus said, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'" (Mark 4:9; if you have young children, come up with motions to go with the passage. It will help!)

Action: Think about your kids. How is their soil? Take them outside with some seeds (of any kind) and "plant" some seeds in a few different terrains (e.g., on the driveway, in some rocky ground, and in some good soil). Ask them which seeds will grow best. Then explain to them that our hearts can be like any of those, and that Jesus wants us to have soft hearts that are like good soil.

WEEK 3

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 6-7

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Mediation: "People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37)



MONDAY :: READ MARK 6:1-13

In vv. 8-9, what did Jesus instruct the disciples to take with them?

What does this imply about how God would meet their needs?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 6:14-29

Who were people confusing Jesus with? Why?

What are some things that distinguishes Jesus from other prophets and historical religious leaders of their day?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 6:30-44

When Jesus gets out of the boat, in what state does he find the crowd? What are they looking for? Why might they be there?

What did the disciples suggest that Jesus do in vv. 35-36? In what ways might you avoid meeting the needs of others?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 6:45-56

Why did Jesus stay back after the disciples left for Bethsaida? (v. 46)

How do the people in Gennesaret (v. 53-56) differ from those in Nazareth (v. 1-6)? How were the outcomes different?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 7:1-23

What are some traditions of men that we add to the commandments of God as a part of our cultural context?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 7:24-37

Is the woman in verses 25-30 a Jew or a Gentile? What does this say about the nature of the miracles that Jesus is now performing?

LIVE IT

Ask God to search your heart to reveal any unbelief. How might your unbelief be limiting Jesus' power in your life and in the lives of those around you?

What are some habits that you have formed that reveal the condition of your heart? Spend some time with the Lord, repenting and asking for his power to change you.

Is there a person (or some people) to whom God is sending you? Who is it? What is a step (or two) you could take this week in that sending?

track two :: family

Did the time work well last week? If so, do it again. If not, try picking a different time this week.

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 6—7 over the days of the week

Memory / Mediation: "People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37)

Action: As a family, read the story of the Feeding of the 5000 in Mark 6. Ask you children if Jesus and his followers had enough food for the crowds. How did the people get enough to eat? Ask them if they know of anyone who has a need that seems too big. Together, ask God to meet that need like he met the needs of the 5000 on that day.

WEEK 4

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 8-9

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Mediation: "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it." (Mark 8:34-35)



MONDAY :: READ MARK 8:1-13

Jesus gave thanks before performing this miracle. How does thankfulness to the Father permeate your life?

In what ways might you test Jesus and ask for signs before you trust Him?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 8:14-30

What is Jesus revealing about himself through the leftover baskets of bread?

What do you hear from others as to who Jesus was/is? Who do you say that he is?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 8:31-9:13

What does it mean to set our minds on the things of God rather than the things of man?

How might you have been ashamed of your faith in Jesus this week?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 9:14-29

In what areas of your life do you "believe" and trust God's promises?

What areas of your life do you need Jesus to help you with your unbelief?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 9:30-41

When are you more likely to compare yourself with others? Why do you think this is?

What does it look like to be "servant of all" in your context today?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 9:42-50

How might you cause other, potentially less spiritually mature, people to sin?

What sinful habits, actions, or attitudes do you need to “cut off” to avoid God’s harsh judgment and maintain your “saltiness?”

LIVE IT

Jesus tells his disciples and the crowd what is necessary to follow Him. Throughout the week, think of simple ways to deny yourself and put others first?

Repent of the ways you have taken sin lightly in your walk with the Lord. Write down some practical steps you are going to take to avoid these temptations.

What is God saying to you this week? What action can you take in your life to respond to what He is saying? Really. Don’t rush past this. As you think about this Text, what action is the King calling you to take this week?

track two :: family

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 8—9 over the days of the week

Memory / Mediation: "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it." (Mark 8:34-35)

Action: Find a few stories about the persecuted church that your children will be able to handle (see websites like kidsofcourage.com). Tell them the story. Talk about how in many places it is very difficult and even dangerous to follow Jesus. What does God promise as it relates to their suffering (see Mark 8.34-35 above)? After discussing this and answering their questions, spend a few moments praying for our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted.



WEEK 5

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 10-11

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory/ Meditation: "Jesus looked at them and said, With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)

MONDAY :: READ MARK 10:1-16

Think back through your last week. Is there any way that it was marked by hard-heartedness like some of the Pharisees?

How might you take steps toward living as a child of your heavenly Father, utterly dependent upon Him and without self-sufficiency?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 10:17-31

Are there any ways you like the rich young ruler? (Self-righteous? Hiding behind position or possessions? Holding onto something the King requires?)

What was Jesus response to the rich young man (v. 21)?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 10:32-45

Does James and John's request have any similarities to tendencies you see in yourself?

What was Jesus' response to James and John?

What steps could you take this week to reflect Christ's humble, sacrificial servanthood?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 10:46-52

What stands out to you about the healing of Bartimeaus' sight?

What parallels could you see between what Jesus preached through Mark 10 (humility, Kingdom of God, etc.) and his healing of Bartimeaus?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 11:1-13

Jesus requested to have a colt brought to him along with some special instructions (Mark

11:2-3). What is your response when “The Lord needs it...”?
What stands out to you in Jesus’ triumphal entry? How can you praise the Lord today?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 11:14-33

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? What was he teaching the disciples?
How is your life producing fruit in this season?

LIVE IT

This week, what situation or relationship can you enter with the attitude to “not to be served, but to serve, and give your life away”? (Mark 10:45)

Write down some Kingdom things that seem impossible to you. Bring them to God, remembering that with Him all things are possible.

track two :: family

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 10-11 over the days of the week

Memory/ Meditation: Mark 10:27 :: Jesus looked at them and said, With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.

Action: Ask your kids: What is something that is impossible? Share with them some “impossible things” that God has done in your life. Then have them draw a picture or make some artwork about one of those stories. Then pray together and ask God to do impossible things.



WEEK 6

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 12-14

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Meditation: "The most important one, answered Jesus, is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

MONDAY :: READ MARK 12:1-27

Why do you think some of the religious leaders were trying to trap Jesus?
Like some of the religious leaders, in what areas of your life do you struggle to trust scripture?
Ask God to help you to see the joy of obeying Him?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 12:28-44

How do the examples of the scribes and widow in vv. 35-44 follow Jesus' commands in vs. 29-31?
In what ways today will you follow vv. 29-31, loving God and loving your neighbor?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 13:1-23

What are Jesus' instructions to His generation?
Many people believe Jesus' words ere are about the coming destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Read the Text again from that perspective.

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 13:24-36

What does Jesus say in this Text?
How will you respond?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 14:1-42

How does Jesus prepare for His betrayal, arrest, and death on the cross?
Preparation is necessary to commune with the Lord. How are you preparing today to commune with our Lord and Savior?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 14:43-72

What is Jesus' response to aggression, and how might that shape our response?
Peter said he loved Jesus, yet under pressure denied Him. Are there any ways you have acted like Peter?

LIVE IT

Ask God to search your heart and illuminate parts of Scripture in which you can trust more. Confess any lack of trust and ask God to increase your faith.

Consider how you are preparing the way for Jesus coming again. Are you ready? How are you preparing the way for others? What discipline can you add to your life to aid in your preparation for Jesus' coming?

Show love for God in a new and creative way. Do a loving deed today for a neighbor. Take a moment and ask God to lead you in this.

track two :: family

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 12-14 over the days of the week

Memory / Meditation: "The most important one, answered Jesus, is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

Action: Ask your kids to brainstorm together with you about a way you could love someone else as a family. Maybe it is taking someone some ice cream. Maybe it is giving away a toy or some money. Pick one of the acts of love they come up with and do it. Explain to them that loving others like this is a central part of what following Jesus is about.



WEEK 7

track one

SUNDAY :: READ MARK 15-16

Pray the Common Prayer

Memory / Meditation: "'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.'" (Mark 16:6)

MONDAY :: READ MARK 15:1-5

What did Jesus' response to the accusations reflect about his character?
In what area of your life might God be requesting your love through humble silence?

TUESDAY :: READ MARK 15:6-15

Pilate, the chief priests, and the crowds were united in their desire to "crucify him!" Are there any ways your view of Jesus influenced by those around you today?
Who was Barabbas? How are we like Barabbas?

WEDNESDAY :: READ MARK 15:16-32

Reflect on the immense suffering Jesus experienced.
Many questioned Jesus' power as he hung on the cross. Are there ways you have questioned Jesus' power this week?

THURSDAY :: READ MARK 15:33-41

What is the significance of the temple curtain being torn when Jesus died?
What did the centurion proclaim when Jesus breathed his last breath (Mark 15:39)? Why is this significant? What is your response?

FRIDAY :: READ MARK 15:42-47

How did Joseph of Arimathea reflect courage?
What resources does he use to serve Jesus, even after Jesus had died? What resources

can you use this week for God's kingdom?

SATURDAY :: READ MARK 16:1-8

What does the "young man dressed in a white robe" in the tomb tell the women to do?

How did the women respond?

Are there any fears holding you back from sharing your faith with others?

LIVE IT

Spend time thanking God for Jesus sacrifice on the cross.

Who in your life does not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord? Pray for their heart to be softened to hear the good news of Jesus and what He has accomplished on the cross. Pray for the courage and opportunity to share the Good News this week.

Recognizing that Jesus' Resurrection means that one day the world will be made right, write a list of things that will be true of the world one day. Start each sentence with one day . . . When you finish your list, share them with someone else.

track two :: family

This week, do the following together as a family.

Bow together and pray the Common Prayer

Read Mark 15-16 over the days of the week

Memory / Meditation: "'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.'" Mark 16:6

Action: As a family act out the story of the cross, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When done, ask them questions about what happened in the story and what it means. After you are done, put on some music and have a dance party.