

## Harvest Newsletter and Prayer List 3/20/20

*'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust. For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and a buckler.' Ps 91.1-4*

*Dear saints in Christ,*

The coronavirus has taken us all by surprise, and continues to impact our lives in many ways. In these times, we can have peace and comfort knowing that 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea' and that our Savior himself is at the Father's right hand, interceding for us, and upholding us by his Holy Spirit.

As our overseeing session at Westminster OPC and Pastor Gerber (and intern) seek how best to minister to God's people in this time, we thought it would be good to update you about several things in addition to Westminster's email updates ( if you are not receiving those, contact Pastor Gerber or Pastor Holst to get on that email list). We are thankful for their faithful work in the Lord.

While we are not able to meet together for worship at the high-school, we will be working on several ways that we can minister to Harvest both individually and as a body. One of the ways we will do that is through sending devotional material several times a week. We hope these will be beneficial to you individually and as a family. We will also be sending out a prayer list (see belong) so that we can join in prayer together, even as we are separated. Along with that, Harvest's weekly blog will continue, and we encourage you to make use of that.

We encourage you to reach out to the elders at Westminster, Pastor Gerber, or Mr. Dickinson if you have any pastoral or diaconal needs. Remember that we do not have to behave like the world, and buy into the panic (and hoarding). One of the blessings of the body of Christ is that we are able to help one another in need, and so avoid panic and anxiety. Let us know if you need any food or other resources during this time.

Although we seek to find ways in which we are able to worship together (through live-streaming, conference call, etc.), in these times worship is carried out more in family settings. But, the family is a 'little church', and so we hope to provide some useful resources and guides to help in family worship.

Our offerings are part of the worship of God. You may set aside your offerings and place them in the offering plate when we are able to meet together once more. Or you may mail checks to Pastor Gerber at 4 School Rd., Moodus, CT 06469. Or you are welcome to drop cash or checks off at his home.

We are praying for you, and trust that God is accomplishing his will. As Habakkuk 2.4 says, the righteous shall live by his faith. We are saved by faith, but we must also continue to live each day, and direct our way, by that same faith in Jesus Christ, who is 'the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13.8).

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Heb 13.20-21*

Here are some of the things that we can join our voices together in with prayer.

- Coronavirus
  - Those providing health care
  - Government officials
  - Those needing healthcare unrelated to the virus
  - Those who have lost jobs
  - The sick and those who have lost friends/family
  - For God to glorify himself through this
  - For Christians to have confidence and find hope in God, and be prudent and wise
  - Here's a prayer by Matthew Henry for times of pestilence which might be helpful to guide our prayers: 'Holy and Mighty LORD, Who didst turn back the angel of the plague from the dwellings of Thy people; we beseech Thee to hear our cry for those who are suffering and dying under the visitation of disease. Mercifully bless the means which are used to stay the spread of sickness; strengthen those who labour to heal and comfort the afflicted; support those who are in pain or distress; speedily restore those who have been brought low; and unto all who are beyond healing, grant Thy heavenly consolation and Thy saving grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'<sup>1</sup>
- For God to raise up laborers to preach his word throughout the world
- The Church
  - Our Witness
  - Our denomination
  - Harvest and Westminster
  - Our missionaries (especially during this time of peril)
- Neighbors
- Our personal sanctification
  - Confession and forgiveness of sins, assurance of pardon
  - That we would daily put to death sin and put on Christ
  - Protection from evil

'Prayer is the most important work in the kingdom of God.' O. Hallesby

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.matthewhenry.org/> is a great resource for prayers for all sorts of occasions.