

Prayer Vigil 2005

"Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?" Jesus asked His disciples.

We are pleased that you have accepted the invitation to pray during these hours. It is our prayer that this time will be a blessing to you and that your daily prayer life will be enhanced by this experience.

(This year's devotion material is built around God's promises in Isaiah and the hymns that the book of Isaiah has inspired)



As you spend this hour in prayer and meditation, direct your eyes and your thoughts to this little key ring tag and contemplate the words of Isaiah that they hold.

"Our griefs." That's what it says. To appreciate what this means, we must reflect on our sinfulness and all that it causes. What sicknesses and hurts do you bear? What broken relationships surround you? Contemplate the evil in the world and the evil that permeates us and tempts us daily . . . our worries and fears . . . our doubts at God's love . . . our unwillingness to follow God's Law.

Contemplate these words from Isaiah:

Isaiah 1:2-4

"Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him."

Isaiah 2:6-8

"You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and clasp hands with pagans. Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made."

How far God's Old Testament people had come from believing God's promises and following His will! How much the corruption in us and around us mirrors those times. As the Lord draws near to us and we come near to Him, we, like Isaiah, are consumed with fear.

Isaiah 6:1-5

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Pray this hymn - #233 "Lord, to You I Make Confession"

In the midst of our sin, Isaiah points us to God's forgiving grace:

Isaiah 1:18-20

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah knew that grace, because it had touched him first hand. See how he responded to that grace.

Isaiah 6:6-8

"Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Pray this hymn for all those who bring God's message of grace to us:

- Sunday school teachers
- Pastors
- Missionaries
- Parents
- God-parents.

**Lord of the Church, we humbly pray
for those who guide us in Thy way
and speak Thy holy Word.**

**With love divine their hearts inspire
and touch their lips with hallowed fire
and needful strength afford.**

**Help them to preach the Truth of God,
redemption through the Savior's blood,
nor let the Spirit cease
On all the Church His gifts to shower
to them a messenger of power;
to us, of life and peace.**

**So may they live to Thee alone,
then hear the welcome word "Well done"
and take their crown above;
Enter into their Master's joy
and all eternity employ
in praise and bliss and love. Amen.**

Not only had God in His grace touched and forgiven and saved Isaiah, He would bring forth from the dead stump of Judah a Saviour . . . a branch.

Read Isaiah 11:1-10 and hymn #67 "Lo, How a Rose is Growing"

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious."

Pray from verse 5 of hymn #67:

**O Saviour, Child of Mary, who felt all human woe;
O Saviour, King of glory, who triumphed o'er our foe;
Bring us at length, we pray,
To the bright courts of heaven and into endless day.**

Read Isaiah 32:1-3

"See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen."

Pray the words of hymn #508 "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

- Pray for those in the midst of the storms of life.
- Pray for those in need of healing.

- Pray for those who have strayed from faith.
- Pray for those who grieve.

Read Isaiah 40:1-8

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Pray the words of hymn #28 “Comfort, Comfort These My People”

Pray for the work of missions that the way for Gospel might be opened:

- in our Sunday School
- in our Nursery School and planned Kindergarten
- in our Community
- in Milton as a new Mission is begun

Read Isaiah 43:1-7

“But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk

through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Pray the words of hymn #411 “How Firm a Foundation”

- Praise God for His redemption.
- Praise God for His angels who protect us.
- Praise God who gathers and who will gather His children from the four corners of the world and bring them into His kingdom forever.
- Praise God for those He has called home to heaven.

Read Isaiah 53:1-12

“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of

my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Meditate on the words of hymn #111 “A Lamb Alone Bears Willingly”

If you turn over your key tag, the other side tells of “His stripes”

Meditate on hymn #116 “Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted”

Read Isaiah 60:1-6

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD."

**Praise God for all that He has done
and for all he continues to do by means of
the cross and the empty tomb.**