



## Prayer Diary December 2023

This diary is designed to help you to pray for the life of our congregation. We would encourage you to take it and use it on a daily basis, asking God for His hand in all that we are and do.

### Scripture Reflection

**She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.**

**Matthew Ch 1 v 21**

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup>** – Give thanks that a **full-time Youth Worker, Stephen Gleghorne, has been appointed** and will commence this role in January. We pray that Stephen will soon fit into his remit and feel an integral part of the team. Pray that he will come alongside the young people and be able to encourage, invest in and help them deepen their faith and identity in Christ.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Many students in schools, colleges and universities will be studying, trying to meet coursework deadlines, and **sitting exams** at this time. Pray that God will help our young people to work hard and to remain focused and calm. Pray that they will know that their value is not based on their performance and results but on God's great love for them.

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Pray for our **Life Groups** and all who attend. Pray that everyone will feel a sense of fellowship, honesty and support and be encouraged by others. Pray especially for those who are quieter and prefer not to speak out, that in time they may feel relaxed and comfortable and feel confident to contribute and join in discussions. May this bring our members closer together for the good of the church and the kingdom.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup>** - At the start of **Advent** we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus as a baby at Christmas. Pray that God will open up our minds to grasp the depth of His love for us. Pray that we will look forward with hope, gladness, peace and assurance to the time when Christ comes for the second time.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>**- Pray that all of the nativity plays, carol singing and festivities that will be taking place during the month of December will **reflect the true meaning of Christmas** and pray that everyone will keep Christ in Christmas. Pray that the Lord will be at the forefront of everyone's mind as we celebrate this special time of year.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>**– Tonight our **Christmas tree Festival** will commence with the lights being illuminated on the tree outside the Church, carol singing and a Christmas message from our Minister Stephen, followed by an opportunity to see all the 45 different trees, of which 18 represent all the various church organisations. There will be a light supper of mince pies and mulled juice. Please pray that many will attend and that weather conditions will be favourable.

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>** - As we head into **colder, wintry weather** we have less hours of daylight. With the cost of heating continuing to be a problem it is a difficult time for everyone especially the elderly. Many who are older may be frail and find movement difficult, which makes it hard to stay warm. Pray also for family and friends taking care of the elderly through the winter. Please pray for safety for all as colder, wet, wintry weather increases and travelling may be treacherous.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup>** – Give God thanks for the various **musical items and choirs** that will be in attendance at the Christmas tree Festival, such as Loanends Primary School choir and orchestra and Ballyduff Silver Band. On Saturday afternoon Riverside Special Needs School will be singing carols followed by music from Antrim Choral Society. Pray that everyone will enjoy this festival and that the Christmas message will be delivered in music and song.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Pray for **Special Schools** in our area – Riverside, Hill Croft, Jordanstown, Castle Tower- and their staff. These schools are under extreme resource pressures and there is a shortfall of approx. 920 places for children requiring special education provision across Northern Ireland. Specialist services may also be difficult to access so please pray for these vulnerable children and their families so that they can get the best education and support they deserve.

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>**- To conclude our Christmas tree Festival a **Praise Service** will be held in our Church at 7pm.. This will be a time to join together in singing carols and to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Give thanks for all who provided music and refreshments and for all the hard work of those involved in exhibiting trees and running the Festival. Pray that all who attend will experience the wonder of Christmas.

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup>**- Many people struggle daily with **physical, mental and spiritual challenges**. Pray that God will give us all strength to commit our worries to Him and to seek help from others in our difficulties. Help us all to remember the truth that Paul shares with us in 2 Corinthians 12 v 9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness".

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>** – The **Salvation Army** put faith into action by providing many vital services at Christmas time, such as soup kitchens, accommodation for the homeless, befriending for the elderly and lonely and boxes of groceries for those suffering with the cost of living crisis. Pray that their practical services to communities can demonstrate the love and fullness of life Jesus can bring.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>** - Continue to pray for **conflict zones around the world** – Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and others which are less well known. Pray for peace, protection and stability for those caught up in violence, displacement, fear and poverty. Ask that governments will act justly and wisely to try and bring a resolution that brings healing to these situations.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>**- We continue to remember those who have been **bereaved** in recent days or who may still have feelings of loneliness after several months or years. May they know the comfort of God's love, the peace that only He can bring and the knowledge that others care and are praying for them. Ask God to help each of us to be a listening ear and a valuable support to all who are experiencing the pain of bereavement, which is often felt more acutely around Christmas time.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup>**- Today marks the end of the Jewish festival of **Hanukkah**, which means "rededication". It is a joyous festival, which celebrates a rededication to God. The Jewish people light candles to remember that the way to fight darkness is to add more light. They publicly celebrate God's power and great deeds. Pray that they would really understand God's love, mercy and forgiveness in the birth and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "Light of the World" (John 8v12).

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>** – As Sunday comes around again, we thank God for **the ministry that takes place in Muckamore Presbyterian**, not only from the pulpit on Sundays but throughout the week and by a great number of people. Thank God for all organisation leaders and for the teams who prepare and serve refreshments on Sunday mornings, at funerals and on other occasions. Thank God for those who distribute magazines and literature, visit folk in their homes, provide transport or keep in touch by telephone. Pray that each one who serves God in these ways will know His blessing and presence with them as they faithfully do His will.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>**- Please pray for all who will be leading our **Christmas Carol Service** tonight as we retell the story of the promised, longed-for Saviour's coming into the world. Pray especially for the Choir and all the preparations they have made for this evening. Remember those who will read, sing, pray, and reflect upon God's Word. Pray, too, for all Christians throughout the world celebrating the birth of our Saviour and remember the needs of others through the offering for the PCI World Development Appeal.

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup>** –Pray today for those who will be **away from home**, family and friends over Christmas; whether for work or because they are in hospital or residential care. Give thanks for technology that allows us to see and talk with one another across the world. Pray that God will grant comfort and joy through this. Pray that the message of love and hope through Jesus will be a joy and delight.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>**- Thank God for **Heather Healy**, our trainee Deaconess, who came to our congregation recently. Thank God for her breadth of experience, her many gifts, her friendly manner and her caring nature. As she continues her studies and works alongside Stephen and Lynn in MPC, pray that she will find great blessing and know God's direction in all she does. May she find time for refreshment and relaxation.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>**- This evening the **PW** will meet together to have their Christmas Event. They plan to have a relaxed evening to enjoy hearing about Christmas traditions and to have some fun and fellowship. Please pray for good weather conditions for those travelling to PW this evening. Also pray that everyone attending will have a lovely evening as they enjoy this time together and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Pray for **persecuted Christians** around the world, for whom the Christmas season brings increased likelihood of attacks. Pray for God's protection and peace for churches and Christians meeting for worship. Pray that they will know God's joy and comfort, like Simeon in the Bible did: "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations." (Luke 2v30-31)

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>** – At this time of year many are **travelling to be with friends and family**. All means of transport will be very busy so please pray for no delays on flights, trains etc. as we approach Christmas Day. Pray also that weather conditions will be favourable for air and sea travel and that drivers will take extra care on the roads. We pray for safety ; we often hear of tragic accidents at this time so pray that everyone can be safely home with family and friends for the Christmas period.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – We thank God for **Stephen, our Minister, Sarah and Beth**. We have been blessed as a congregation for the leading, guidance, care and enthusiasm Stephen brings to every aspect of his ministry and by the support given by Sarah and Beth and their involvement in church life. We pray that they will enjoy celebrating the Christmas period with family and friends, know God's blessing and presence daily and find refreshment and peace over the festive period.

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>** –“Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you, **He is Christ the Lord.**” **Luke Ch2 v 11**. Pray that many will enter into a personal relationship with Jesus and recognise his sovereignty over all things. May this Christmas season bring a deepened love for God, others and desire to reach all those who do not yet know the freedom of salvation.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup>** – Today Christians all over the world will give thanks for **Christmas Day**. Pray for happiness, joy and peace between individuals, families, communities and countries on this special day, which highlights our very real need to put God at the centre of our lives . Pray for our short worship service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus together.

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>** - Thank God for **the gift of friends and family**. During this Christmas season, remember to pray for families who are joining together to spend time in each others' homes. Pray that family members will have a joyful time, enjoy each other's company and if necessary leave any differences aside in order to spread the peace and goodwill of Christmas. May Christ be at the centre of all that is said and done as we celebrate and remember that 'Jesus is the reason for the season'.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>**- Thank God for the hope we have in Him - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever". (Heb 13v8). **Give thanks to God for the positive things that we have encountered over the year**, weddings, new births, renewed friendships, exam success, changes in schools, moving on to university or a new job or an opportunity for service within church or the community. Most importantly, give thanks for all those who have come to faith this year and pray they will be blessed abundantly as they walk with Jesus.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>**- Many people known to us personally and in our congregation are currently going through **medical tests, awaiting surgery or having treatment**. We earnestly pray that God will be with them as they wait patiently for results, that He will strengthen them as they receive a diagnosis and that He will uphold them as they go through surgery or treatment. Pray that each one will experience His peace, know His love and feel His presence as they face each situation.

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Give thanks for the advances in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, which are transforming so many areas of our lives for the better. Pray for wisdom and restraint for the developers, and that strong ethical standards may be maintained. Pray that many will trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit's insight "to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God". (Micah 6v8)

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>**- Take some time today to pray for families who have had to deal with **changed circumstances** this year. This may be due to marriage, moving house, ill health, caring for others, work commitments, living in another country or bereavement. Pray that each person will be able to deal with whatever situation they find themselves in with the Lord's help. Take time to reflect on Proverbs 3:5-6

**Sun 31<sup>st</sup>** – As we think of new beginnings what better way to see in the **New Year than by worshipping our Lord and Saviour**. Pray for our church family that every individual may know the Lord's blessing and will feel a closer personal relationship to God this year. Pray that God's hand will be upon each one of us and that as a body of believers we will grow and flourish together and find true fellowship through the good and sad times.