



Vestry Voices

The Church Family Newsletter

First Congregational
Church of Clinton

June 2021

Editor
Charles T. Tamminen

Pray This Way

Jesus gave a prayer outline for every day and stage of life

After this manner therefore pray ye ...

Matthew 6:9 (KJV)



Rev. Gary Kiontke



Over thirty years ago I heard a teaching that the Lord's Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*) was given by Jesus to His disciples as a high level outline for prayer covering subjects God desires His children would bring to Him. I realized this teaching had merit, but I filed it away because it was too challenging. But it seems the Holy Spirit keeps bringing it back to me. So in the last month I am becoming more aware of the structure of the prayer and how much 'room' there is to pray with each of the eleven phrases.

Here is what I found in Matthew Henry's introduction to his three page commentary on the prayer:

The method [of this prayer] is instructive, and the expression very concise. It has much in a little, and it is requisite that we acquaint ourselves with the sense and meaning of it ... it is used acceptably no further than it is used with understanding and without vain repetition.

This brief quote is the scholarly equivalent of the simple teaching I heard many years ago.

It seems reasonable Jesus never intended His followers to memorize His concise teaching about prayer as something to say over and over with the same words. As powerful as the phrases are, they lose their power when repeated without taking time to meditate on each one. And we need to allow our daily prayers to grow and expand as we understand each topic better. The understanding comes from life experiences, and putting more Scripture in our hearts.

The eleven phrases begin by addressing Father God. The next five phrases concern

Him and His work, and the need for people to cooperate with the work He is doing on earth. The last five phrases shift the emphasis from Father God and His work to the basic needs all people have for food, forgiveness and freedom.

This article will take each phrase word-by-word in the original word order that was given to Matthew as the Holy Spirit reminded him of Jesus' exact words. Suggestions will be given for prayers that fit under each high level subject.

Father of us

The first word is a cry of address to Father God for His attention. The second word tells us we share Father God with every other Christian on earth, especially those in our local church body. Think of it as seeing the most important person in our life on the other side of a crowded room, and calling out to him to give us his attention. This is an opportunity to thank Father God for all the qualities that make Him the perfect father. Some would be: His provision for us, His protection of us, His instruction of us, His two-fold discipline of us (both training and correction), and His ever-present LOVE. There are many more, and God would be glad to show them to us. I am reminded of Sunday afternoons before my younger sister and I started school. Our father would sit down on the couch between us as we both leaned in close to his sides. He would then read the Sunday comic strips to us slowly and let us look at each panel. We both wanted to be on his left side because of the comfort of hearing and feeling his heartbeat. But we agreed to take turns for the privileged place every other Sunday. We needed to share our father.

The one in the heavens

This phrase gives the location of Father God, but notice plural (continued on page 2 ...)

Inside this issue:

Pray This Way	1
Sundays in June	3
Reflections Winter 2020+	4
Remembering an Extraordinary Christian Lady, Holly Vautier	5
First Concern Baby Bottle Fundraiser	6
Editor's Note	6
June 2021 Calendar of Events	7



Pray This Way (... continued from page #1)

heavens. Think of the vision John had of the highest heaven where God's Throne is and all the spirit beings, as well as the souls of the faithful who have died from the beginning, around the throne. This heaven cannot be seen with our physical, earthly eyes. However, there is also the heaven of the atmosphere of the earth. God is present in both heavens, so we may experience Him where we are on earth, and acknowledge that His ultimate home is beyond us. Taking some time with this paradox can begin to expand our understanding of the infinite nature of God. It is appropriate for us to give prayers of praise and thanksgiving before humbly moving on.

It must be made holy – The Name of Thee

This command flows from the reality that God is set apart as the infinite, awesome and perfect Creator, King, Judge and Savior. Therefore it is fitting for us to respond by ascribing all of this, and more, to Father God. We are requesting that all people, including us, would acknowledge the holiness of God's Name. Here are some truths to consider and requests appropriate to this phrase. Some of His Names are: Provider, Banner (of Victory), (The One Who is) There, Peace, Righteousness, Eternal, Almighty, Most High, Lord, Savior. Our first petition should be that we are always aware of and acknowledging His powerful and holy presence in our lives. Recalling His command to Moses that His people be holy as He is holy, we should also request help so our every thought, attitude and decision to act is motivated by the desire to be holy as Father God is holy; and, that we would do the holy and righteous acts that His Son did in the power of the Holy Spirit. And, we can thank Him for His holiness, the holiness of His son, and the holiness He desires to give us. We can also prayerfully meditate on the roles of the Cross, the Resurrection, Pentecost, the Church and the Word of God in supporting us as we seek to make Father God's Name holy in our lives.

It must come – The Kingdom of Thee

In His first coming to earth, Jesus began God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus' first words after John was put in prison were, the Kingdom of God is near. When Jesus sent out seventy-two disciples, He told them to make the same announcement. Jesus told the men John sent to Him while in prison of what He was doing so John could believe God's Kingdom had come in Him. This is an opportunity to pray for the consummation of the Kingdom work Jesus gave us, and that we would know and do our part to hasten its coming.

It must be made to be done – The Will of Thee

As with the command about holiness, this command has to do with our response to God's will. He does everything to complete His plan. We must pray that we would offer our-

selves to both learn God's good, pleasing and perfect will, and then do it. We can pray that both we and others would be willing to submit to God's will.

As in heaven, also upon earth

This completes the first half of the prayer outline. In John's vision of the highest heaven, he saw all around God's Throne were continually worshipping Him and doing His will. However, this is not true on earth today. So we must pray that God's holiness in His people, the expansion of His Kingdom and people willing to submit to His will become more and more the state of affairs on earth. All the prayer subjects in the first half of the prayer have to do with the completion of the last command Jesus made before returning to His Father. His followers are to do all they can to help everyone to learn to obey all Jesus commanded. This opens the door to pray for every evangelism and discipleship ministry, as well as all missionaries all around the world from every sending country in every receiving country. This could result in many prayers!

Bread of sustenance needed for this day, Thou must give it to us today

We all have needs for nourishment to strengthen us with energy to do God's will in advancing His Kingdom on earth so all may be holy as He is holy. This is the place for us to ask Father God to give us the nourishment we need for body, soul and spirit to do the work He has given us for today. Bread includes the Word of God. Pray that we and others will feed on God's Word every day. Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life. We must also pray that we get nourished by Him every day. So we should pray that we make time to be with God in silence, to listen to Him, and to pour out our hearts to Him in open honesty. One more thing; very few of us realize this is a collective prayer for the church as a whole. Father God will always give enough sustenance for the church. However, in certain areas He may give a few people more than they need and leave others short of what they need. It is up to the church to share in such a way that each one ends up with all he or she needs. Another subject for prayer is that people would learn to have proper care for one another so no one lacks what is needed.

And Thou must forgive to us the debts of us

We all have the need to be forgiven of many things, both as individuals and for what we have done, or not done, collectively as a church. Every day, as individuals, we should ask God to show us all the debts we have incurred towards Him that day. As a body gathered together, churches should do the same. I do not recall, in any church I have attended, a time when the congregation actually gathered together to do this. Many Americans should add this

(continued on page 3 ...)



Pray This Way (... continued from page #2)

to their prayer list as a confession and petition. Let it start with our church.

As also we, we have forgiven the debtors of us

Jesus taught we cannot expect to be forgiven unless we also forgive others. The fact that He repeats ‘we’ in this phrase emphasizes the necessity that we forgive others whatever debts they may have towards us. We should ask Father God to teach us to learn to look at life from the point of view of others and not just our own point of view. After I had been praying every night before bed for a little more than a year, always closing with this model outline prayer, I felt the need to add sacrificial love to forgiveness. These two phrases teach the necessity of reciprocal forgiveness. One night I asked God about reciprocal love. I felt good when I showed love to others, but was embarrassed to receive love. It was as if God asked me, would you deny the joy you get in loving others to other people; learn to gratefully receive My love through others, so they can experience what you experience when you give. This is an example of what God can teach us when we pray this outline prayer slowly, attentively, and open to the Holy Spirit.

And may Thou not lead us into temptation

This is not a direct command. It is an expression that Father God would lead us, and we would follow, in the right way, walking with Jesus. When this happens, we will have the grace for the strength to overcome any and all tempta-

tions: temptations from our own evil desires, temptations from a world that is not submitted to God, and temptations from evil spirits. This is an opportunity to ask God to show us temptations we do not yet know we have. All people over a certain age are aware of those things that tempt them most. Take time to pray about the temptations we know are holding us back.

But Thou must deliver us from the evil

The final petition is for our Father God to deliver us from the evil. The article is important. Evil is not abstract. It is specific. Just as there are many specific temptations, there are many specific evils. We need to pray about each one we know is a problem for us. And we must pray to be shown any evil that is gaining control over us of which we are ignorant. These last two phrases address our need for freedom from evil to serve Father God in the joy and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

I have only scratched the surface of all that can be prayed from this outline Jesus gave us. In my few feeble attempts to pray in this manner, I have yet to go beyond ten minutes. But this is longer than the forty-five seconds it takes to say the words. Let us hold each other accountable to learn how to fully pray in the way Jesus outlined for us. This will require setting aside time during the day, and committing to gather together regularly, to practice praying in this way.

Sundays in June

We will have Communion on June 6 and June 20.

Here are the details on the sermon texts and themes for each of worship services on the Lord’s Day:

Sunday	Readings	Theme
June 6	2 Samuel 7:1-17; Luke 1:30-33	Jesus, the Savior, fulfills Nathan’s Messianic Word to David
June 13	1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29; Mark 10:42-45	Servant leaders have loyal and obedient servants
June 20 Father’s Day	Psalm 138	The faithful God says ‘yes’ to prayers for strength
June 27	1 Kings 17:1-16; Luke 18:13	God provides for those who give everything to Him

As more people are fully vaccinated and limits on the size of gatherings have essentially ended, we hope many people will take advantage of the privilege we have to gather together to worship Jesus. We do so on the first day of the week, when He rose from the dead. Let us not take this privilege for granted, as so many did pre-pandemic.

Reflections Winter 2020+

By: Lessons Learned by a Disciple of Christ

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I had no clue when I signed up for a BSF-Bible study on the book of Genesis how it would impact my understanding, faith and trust in God. The revelation of God’s promise to Abraham – the Father of All Nations – that all the generations that would follow him that believed in God would be viewed as righteous by God stuck with me. Abraham was promised by God, yet Abraham would take matters into his own hands. God reveals his mercy and grace time and time again as Abraham repeats sins that he was caught doing. God’s people, despite their closeness to Abraham and God, would continually let their selfish desires rule; starting with Abraham’s second grandson stealing Isaac’s firstborn’s birth rights. The ancestral line in Genesis is full of jaw dropping acts of sin and extremes God’s people will go from His presence. Yet, God showed how faith in Him was always the answer. Amazingly, God’s plan allowed the sins of his people to be fulfilled and many times would help the sinner turn from their evil ways. God wants to be believed.

I understand the depths of God’s love by the sacrifice of God – in the flesh, as Jesus – to pay the price of our sins. Undeserving, I have accepted the redemption He offers; and reading/studying the written word of God has instilled the belief that God has a plan for each person. Sort of like a well marked trail in the woods. I actively embrace the Kingdom of Heaven/God (“KoG”) that Jesus brought “near.” It is only by the teachings of the Holy Bible that I find my way into the spiritual oasis given to us as a retreat to the distractions of our worldly domain, which by God’s design, is Satan’s domain or playground.

In a recent prayer jog, I imagined coming upon a forest of tall pines as approaching the Kingdom of God. Before the forest is in sight I am being blasted by the turbulent wind which makes breathing difficult, very similar to getting caught up with the turbulence of today’s “news,” and left with a sense of immobility. The hollowing in my ears is so distracting; it makes thinking and planning impossible. As the forest comes into sight, I’m already envisioning a break from “the world I live in.” As I strive closer to the forest, the winds are diminishing by the mighty pine branches. As I cross into the forest/KoG, the wind’s distractions are gone and I bask in peace and tranquility. My senses come alive and I feel the warmth in the air and smell the sweetness of the forest growth. I am alone with my thoughts without a ringing in my ears. There is a peace and stillness. My eyes are focusing on the beauty of nature. Whatever burdens that have not been lifted away, I can readily leave at the cross. As I

follow the path laid out before me, it brings me to the edge of the KoG where I can see, off in the distance, other forests/Kingdom of God extensions. I feel there exists fellowship, growth and healing as we transverse throughout the Kingdom of God. Ironically, as the path I’m following leads out to the “world,” I noticed it will be obscured, almost hidden by some saplings and brush as viewed upon the return trip. This spoke to me how the “enemy,” with his power of deception, will always be making it difficult to find the entrance to the Kingdom of God. And, what Jesus was eluding to when He said the “... kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15)

Combining the recent truths God has revealed to this lowly servant-want-to-be, I am able to trust God, and throughout the generations I see the line of good and bad being crossed to an extreme that rivals even the misdoings of today. Yet, I believe God views all who believe in Him are righteous before Him. I believe that the only way to come into the family of God and the eternal Kingdom of God is to accept the salvation offered by Jesus. I believe in the many bible verses that God has a path for everyone.

In a little over a week, I listened to several people of faith share the loneliness of being near death. Everyone continued to help “others” despite their pain and difficulty. Including my own experience of being alone, I was reminded of the loneliness of Jesus crying out to the Father, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” It was humbling, and a life lesson, to listen and hear the fear of being alone; otherwise, my attempts to lead prayer and encourage would have created distance in trying to be supportive. In my reflections, I questioned the effectiveness to pray to God to change what He has allowed (and planned as He has a path for all) in a person for His glory. I know a lesson, I learned when listening to a person in need, was to pray for the concerns immediately, lest I forget, later. Those were the times of the Holy Spirit leading as the confirmation was acknowledged, as soon as the prayer was made. Amen.

I have attempted to learn more about prayer and how to present our petitions before God. I’ve prayed on how Jesus taught us to pray with the Our Father; asked people’s opinion on the matters; and planned on presenting some thoughts on prayer several months ago. In hindsight, I feel the extra time and prayer gave me something worth sharing. But only God knows when I start my Reflections Spring 2021 article.

There are experiences, trials, rewards and hardships in everyone’s life that are meant to be used to further the Kingdom of God. We will struggle on our own power and afflictions until we go through and accept that God will use one’s life experiences for His glory. Our being in the Kingdom of

(continued on page 5 ...)



Reflections Winter 2020+ (... continued from page #4)

God will allow all to work as part of the whole plan God intends for His people. “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.” (Ecclesiastes 3:3, 6-7)

Remember: God, the Creator of all, loves us and has a path for all of us to enter His Kingdom of Heaven. We need to turn from our ways and the treasures we have formulated, repenting and following the Word of God. Let God help to

make each day count as we train our thoughts not to wander, but to seek what work our hands will do to grow the Kingdom for our salvation and the life of our future brothers and sisters. And, when comes a time when God allows a trial upon your life, remember the darkest hour of the night is followed by dawn. God has all the answers. Genesis has many examples of abiding in His time and the consequences of not. The lessons learned from waiting upon Him are what will make the Kingdom of Heaven an experience of having Heaven on earth. Or not.

Remembering An Extraordinary Christian Lady, Holly Vautier

By Elin Lee

One of the nicest things about being a Christian is that on occasion, we can take a few minutes to share our thoughts about our closest Christian friends — especially those who've influenced us the most. In my life, one of those people is Brenda Holly Vautier. I say “is” because her wisdom and advice are as active and true in my life today as they were after we met in 1997.

The first thing I noticed about Holly was that she seemed to have difficulty walking. She was coming into the church and her body was silhouetted against the bright colors of the park across Walnut Street. I would soon learn that Holly was a brilliant model of perseverance in extreme and continuous pain; I'd also learn she was the perfect model of stubbornness and determination in that pain. Lastly, after her cancer diagnosis, she became *the* model of how to die with grace and dignity.

Holly and I bonded quickly because of our mutual love for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She was completely sold out to Him and to the spreading of His Word. She was honest and never compromised the truth of the Gospel or jazzed it up for a quick sell. She would speak it out — but aside from her personal testimony (if it was included), she always let it speak for itself: She knew and understood its power. And she reflected it.

We also bonded through our love for music. Holly was a classically-trained flutist; I was a classically-trained ‘cellist — but I was badly out-of-practice. That sad fact never stopped her from encouraging me, and I joined the worship team — as a singer.

The second thing I noticed about Holly was the condition of her hands. They were bent and obviously severely damaged, and I tried not to stare. Rheumatoid arthritis had done

that to them, and it was often difficult for her to use them, especially in very cold weather. But as I said, Holly was stubborn and determined: When doctors told her she'd eventually have to give up playing her beloved flute because of the strictures of her fingers, well, I'd love to have seen the set of her jaw when she heard *that!* The doctors' “eventually” turned into twenty years as three times, she had extensive surgery to rebuild the tendons and joints of all her fingers, just so she could keep playing. And play she did, in chamber ensembles, bands — and in church. Listening to her play during worship was always a lovely blessing!

All of her surgeries, including three for heart problems, were excruciating and Holly endured long recovery periods. Every operation was successful and as hoped, those on her hands gave her more years to play. There was a terrible downside however: each orthopedic procedure required a little more tissue to do the repair work until finally, there just wasn't enough left to operate a fourth time.

As a ministry team, Grif and Holly poured themselves into the lives of everyone in their care. My fondest memory of them as a couple came during the height of a nasty flu season in the late nineties. Just about everyone in the church was sick and barely able to function. When Grif called one night to say they were on their way over, I tried to put them off. We just weren't ready for visitors. But he insisted and a few minutes later, Holly waited in the car as he rang our doorbell and presented us with a box containing a huge pot of hot, homemade chicken soup. Nestled with it were fresh, hot buttered biscuits, a salad, and oranges and homemade cookies for dessert. There was enough of everything for two meals apiece, including napkins and disposable dishes, forks, knives and spoons. That evening, they took meals to every church family stricken with flu.

(continued on page 6 ...)

Remembering Holly Vautier ... (... continued from page #5)

As they drove away, I saw Holly's face in the glare from the porch light. She was grinning and waving. I can see her as I write this, and the image makes me smile.

Grif and Holly had one healthy year of marriage before she became afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis and a mysterious, debilitating illness that left her bedridden for six years. With time, of course, she recovered, and they went on to

seminary and decades of Christian service. For the rest of their fifty-one years together, they were devoted to each other as they labored side by side for the Lord Jesus. They were admired and much loved by everyone who knew them.

In closing and without any frills, I want to add one final thing about Holly: She was the bravest, most courageous woman I ever knew.



First Concern Baby Bottle Fundraiser

Over fifteen baby bottles were distributed in May.

First Concern is located in Clinton on High Street. The traditional close of this fundraiser is Father's Day June 20.

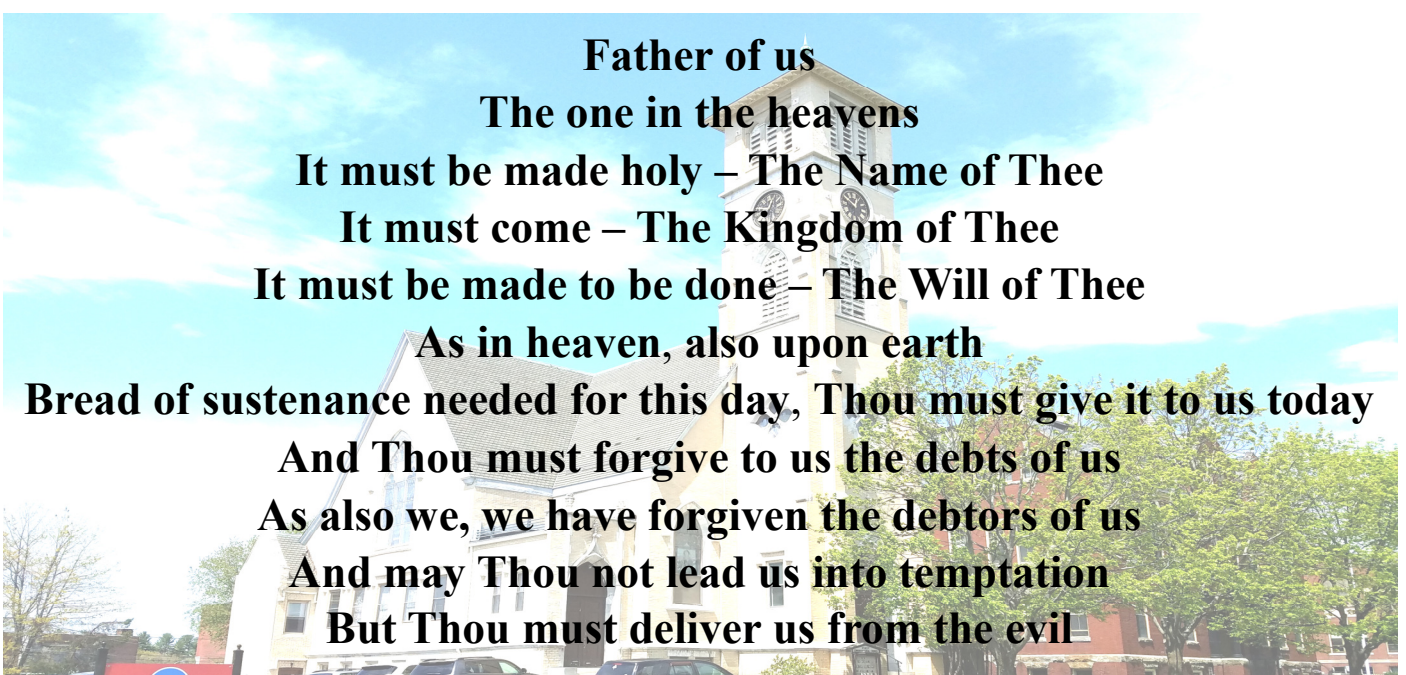
The money helps First Concern continue to offer services to women and teens in the community, whether it's the Mother's Support Group, the Post Abortion Bible Study or the peer counseling and free pregnancy tests.

While you have the bottle at home, please pray for the ministry. The director, volunteers and board need wisdom and love for the clients who come to them. They need prayer in order to even reach the women and teens who could use their services.

Thank you very much for your support and your prayers. First Concern could not do this ministry without them.

Editor's Note

We will be publishing regular, full-length newsletters for each of the summer months. So, here is your June 2021 issue. Now, watch your mailboxes the first week of July and August, for your other two full-length summer issues!



Father of us

The one in the heavens

It must be made holy – The Name of Thee

It must come – The Kingdom of Thee

It must be made to be done – The Will of Thee

As in heaven, also upon earth

Bread of sustenance needed for this day, Thou must give it to us today

And Thou must forgive to us the debts of us

As also we, we have forgiven the debtors of us

And may Thou not lead us into temptation

But Thou must deliver us from the evil



JUNE 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3 (**)	4	5
6 Communion Sunday (Note #1)	7	8	9	10 (**)	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 (**)	18	19
20 Communion Sunday; Baby Bottle Fundraiser ends (Note #2)	21	22	23	24 (**)	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Calendar Notes:

#1) 6/6 — Communion Sunday Worship.

#2) 6/20 — Communion Sunday Worship.

Also: Father's Day

Also: First Concern "Baby Bottle Fundraiser" ends.

(**) Thursday Prayer: **3:00 PM** (in FCC Parlor).

