

# Monday 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December

## Personal Meditation and Worship

*"I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory"* says the LORD Almighty. *"The silver is mine and the gold is mine"* declares the LORD Almighty. *"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,"* says the LORD Almighty. *"And in this place I will grant peace,"* declares the LORD Almighty. [Haggai 2:7–9]

These verses talk about God coming to dwell with his people again following the exile. We too have this similar hope that Jesus will return as King.

- At this Advent-time spend time in worshipping the coming King; inviting him to come more into your own life and the life of your Church and our town

We are experiencing a shaking of nations of sorts at this time of financial instability.

- Where is your hope?
- What is your house built on?
- Do you desire Him above all else?

1. Think on these things and meditate on the One who holds all things in His hands.
2. Make time to recommit your life to the Lord Jesus this Advent.
3. Also pray for those you know who need a revelation of Jesus the King!
4. Pray too for those who, in the lead up to Christmas, are facing personal and family financial difficulty and challenge.

*"Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.* [Revelation 22:20, 21]

*Other Scriptures for meditation and prayer: Matthew 7:24–27; Matthew 16:13–19*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December

## Christmas in the Town

*"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."*  
[Luke 2:11–14]

We are in a season of preparation for Christmas. The shops are busier and life itself seems to get more frantic for us all. As you take time in your own prayer life to welcome the Christ-child, pray for:

1. Schools near to where you live in their Christmas presentations and productions, that the meaning of Christmas would not be lost but be enhanced for the children
2. Seedlings Trust (Paul Caine) and others who minister into children's lives; that they would be able to present the real heart of the Christmas message in a way that makes sense and connects with children and young people
3. SHINE's involvement with the Christmas Lantern procession in the Town Centre on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm, concluding with carol singing and prayers at the Parish Church
4. The St Helens Nativity, on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm sponsored by SHINE, and being produced by the Churches in conjunction with St Helens College media department and with the support of the Borough Council; that it would be well attended and clearly portray the Christmas story
5. Shopkeepers and workers; that in the midst of busyness they would still recognise the coming of Jesus. Pray for Marjorie Conroy the Town Centre Chaplain and her volunteers as they seek to encourage and support town centre workers

*For further meditation and prayer: Isaiah 9:2–7*

Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December

## St Helens' Churches

*We continually remember before our God and Father your **work** produced by **faith**, your **labour** prompted by **love**, and your **endurance** inspired by **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also **with power, with the Holy Spirit** and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so **you became a model to all the believers** in Macedonia and Achaia. **The Lord's message rang out from you** not only in Macedonia and Achaia — your faith in God has become known everywhere. [1Thessalonians 1:3–8]*

There is such a lot of good work going on in our churches. Let us pray for:

- a. Faith, love and hope for church leaders and church members
  - b. The work being done that it would be effective and glorifying to God
  - c. Endurance, and perseverance for all God's people, to keep on serving God
  - d. The power of God's Holy Spirit to be seen and the Word of God to be heard from our churches, and from our lives
  - e. Our churches to be models to the communities we serve of God's love
  - f. The Lord's message to ring out clearly from our churches and the lives of their members
  - g. Our faith in God to be known throughout our communities
1. Pray for your own church and your leaders
  2. Pray for the Churches waiting for new ministers to be appointed:
    - St Helens Parish Church
    - St Thomas, Eccleston
    - St Peter's, Parr
    - St John's, Ravenhead
  1. Pray for new ministers in the Town:
    - Caroline Andrews, Toll Bar, Newtown and Peasley Cross URC
    - Gary McGowan, Ormskirk Street URC
  4. Pray that God would use the Christmas Services taking place in these churches, to rekindle faith and love for the Lord Jesus.
  5. Pray for a Spirit of unity amongst Christian churches and leaders

*For further meditation and prayer: Revelation 2:1–7; 8–11; 12–17; 18–29.*

*Revelation 3:1–6; 7–13; 14–22*

Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

## Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December

### Christmas Celebration!

*This is how **the birth of Jesus Christ** came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him** in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because **what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit**. 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**." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**" – which means, "**God with us**." [Matthew 1:18–23]*

Jesus was born into a family of faith – which is not everyone's experience. In the midst of our celebrations of Jesus' birth let us remember those in need around us. Pray for:

1. Families who are broken by illness, bereavement or loss
2. Families who face significant financial pressures this Christmas
3. Children facing Christmas without their families around them — in hospital or in a home
4. The homeless, those on the streets and those in hostels
5. Those who, like the Hope Centre in St Helens, are ministering to and caring for homeless people during the Christmas to New Year period
6. The police, social services and other organisations who have to deal with distress, violence, crime, abuse etc. over this period

Pray that more people will discover that Jesus came to save people from their sins to receive a new start and a new life

*For further meditation and prayer: John 1:1–14; Galatians 4:4–7; 2 Corinthians 8:9*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009

## A New Year

*And God said, "Let there be **lights in the expanse of the sky** to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs **to mark seasons and days and years**, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.*

[Genesis 1:14,15]

*Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "**I am making everything new!**" [Revelation 21:1–5]*

New Years were God's idea. He planned days, seasons and years, and he makes all things new. So let us look forward with hope and courage to all that a new year offers us. But first let us take some time to look back with gratitude.

## Give thanks for:

### Hope 2008

1. **The Big Hope Easter Outreach** in the Town Centre; for those reached with the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection; for the other churches which made the Easter message relevant and accessible to people around them.
2. **Hope Where You Live:** the projects demonstrating practical love and the message of hope that churches were involved in during May and June this year; the financial support of our Borough Council; the SHINE and Youth Aflame sponsored outreaches and service at the St Helens Festival in Sherdley Park in July.
3. **Hope Explored:** the courses like Alpha, START, and Emmaus which churches offered during September/October to help people find out more about Jesus and faith in Christ; the Council staff who attended the Journeys Course which SHINE was able to offer in the Town Hall.
4. **The Gift of Hope:** the St Helens Nativity in Church Square, and for the support of the Council and College in this; the many carols services and other special events which made the Christmas message known.

## Pray for:

1. A sense of hope to fill our streets, homes, communities, schools and colleges, businesses and places of worship in the coming year.
2. Churches to find even more creative ways of making the good news of Jesus heard in our Borough

3. SHINE as we look to the coming year; the Trustees meet this month to plan for the year ahead

*For further meditation and prayer: John 10:7–10; Psalm 27; Romans 15:13*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January

## Personal Meditation and Worship

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. **Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart**, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive **blessing from the LORD** and vindication from God his Saviour. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, **that the King of glory may come in.** Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? **The LORD Almighty — he is the King of glory.** Selah [Psalm 24]*

Take this Psalm and turn the ideas into prayer for your own life and the lives of those near to you:

1. Remember the earth is God's; he rules the world. Governments don't; big business doesn't; terrorists don't have the last word; nor do natural or man-made disasters. Praise Him for this!  
You belong to God too; your life is secure in His hands. Take time to put your life afresh into his care; trust in his providence.
2. To draw near to God we must be clean – Jesus makes us clean (see 1 John 1:9). It isn't about how good we make ourselves, it is about how good He makes us (See 2 Corinthians 5:21).  
Confess whatever you need to, and receive his forgiveness again
3. God wants to bless you. Blessing isn't for a special few, it is for all God's children (See Numbers 6:22–27).  
Invite the blessing of God into your life, your family, your finances, your health.
4. God's glory is about His presence, his character, his worth, the essence and wonder of who He is. He wants to invade your life, and your church with his glory.  
Pray that the door of your life will increasingly open to his glory and his Spirit.  
Pray also that increasingly we will experience his glory and the presence of his Holy Spirit in our churches.

*For further meditation and prayer: Exodus 15:1–18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January

## Parenting and Families (from Margery & Barbara)

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*  
[Proverbs 2:1–5]

- Three High Schools in the area have recently hosted courses for parents of teenagers. Please pray for wisdom for the parents who came and a positive improvement in their family life. Pray they will learn to understand their teens' needs and be able to build loving relationships and respectful communication with them.
- Pray for tolerance in families. Ask God to bring peace into stressful family relationships. Pray for better communication and understanding between family members.
- Please pray for the many people working with families in St. Helens: Staff in Children's Centres and Schools, Family Support Teams and the Looked After Children's Team, Foster Carers, Youth Offending Team, Children at Risk Team, Social Services, Police, Community Workers and Volunteers, Youth Leaders, Health Workers, Counsellors, Church Groups. Thank God that we have such a wealth of expertise within our town and pray that all their work with needy families will make a significant difference to many lives.
- Father, we pray for parents who have the added responsibility of bringing up children with special needs. Give them physical and emotional strength to deal with the daily challenges they have. May the right support be available to them and grant them a special portion of your grace as they care for the needs of all their family members. Bring understanding and compassion to those who help with daily care and may these parents feel your presence and peace in their homes and lives.  
*Amen.*
- Please pray for young people seeking a purpose to their lives, especially those not studying or working whose life chances are poor. Pray they will be motivated and inspired to seek out the path that's right for them, and they will work towards a worthwhile future and find happiness and fulfilment in the choices they make.
- Father, help us all to show love and understanding to the families around us. Remove any tendency we might have to criticise and condemn. Please teach us to be compassionate and supportive and show your love at all times. May we offer help where families are struggling, may we offer friendship where families are lonely, and may we bring the love of Jesus into all our relationships both in our homes and in our neighbourhoods, *for Jesus' sake, Amen.*
- Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for our homes and families, for our food and clothing, and for all the happiness that parents and children can share. We ask that

your love may surround us, your care may protect us, and that we may know your peace at all times, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
*(taken from the Anglican Communion Service booklet)*

*For further meditation and prayer: Ephesians 6:1–4; Matthew 19:13 & 14; Mark 9:35–37*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

## Monday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ*  
[Colossians 4: 2 & 3]

### **Saints** (from Phil Pawley)

1. Please pray for new Head Coach Mick Potter and new player Tony Puletua and their families as they move and take up residence in St Helens. It can be difficult coming from another country so pray for God's peace for their families and that they will experience his love and comfort. Pray for new friendships to flourish for parents and children alike. Pray also for Keiron Purtel the assistant coach as he returns to St Helens.
2. Pray for those who spent time on international duty that they return rested and healed from any injuries. Pray also for coaching staff and players that have moved on over the off season, that they will settle in to their new circumstances well and that they will encounter the love of God through caring Christians in their new setting.
3. Please pray for Phil Pawley and for the chaplaincy at SAINTS. Praise God for the favour he has granted Phil, particularly over the last few years, and that Phil's ministry to the club would continue to flourish under the new coach.

### **Seedlings Trust** (from Paul & Jeanette Caine)

1. Schools work is still very much the priority. Paul works in 15 schools, the majority of which are across the St Helens area, three in Warrington and one in Aughton near Ormskirk
2. Please pray for continued relationships with the staff in these schools, Paul visits State, C of E schools and one Catholic Primary. The witness to staff can be as important.
3. "*We are made to worship our God*"; children in school love worship, please pray that as the children learn about this amazing God, they will come to know Him.
4. Paul's calling has always been to evangelise, to be a voice for the children and to the children. In the schools alone, he can share the gospel in assemblies to over 1,500 children per week. Please pray for strength and wisdom.
5. Families: Paul feels very strongly that it is important to reach families as well as the children, and Seedlings are currently praying and seeking God for a way forward in this. Please pray that as these doors open, the enemy will be blocked in trying to scupper the work.
6. Paul has written a children's novel. Please pray that a publisher can be found to help to get this evangelistic tool completed and made available

7. Pray too for the trustees of the Seedlings Trust as they look for new trustees, in particular someone who could help Richard Denno, their treasurer.

*For further meditation and prayer: Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Mark 12:30 & 31*  
Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.

# Monday 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February

## Local Government

*Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king. [1 Peter 2:13–17]*

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. [1 Timothy 2:1 & 2]*

## Let's pray for those with responsibility for local government.

### Pray:

1. For your local councillors
2. For your local ward committee, that works particularly to improve the environment within which you live – they meet this week.  
*Ward Committees are made up of: 3 Ward Councillors, Merseyside Police, Helena Housing, Community Empowerment Network, Tenants and Residents Associations, Parish Councillor, Faith Representative, Registered Social Landlords.*
3. Pray specifically that the representative from the Churches, if there is one, will be given wisdom to know how best to contribute to discussion.
4. About the specific needs which you observe and know about in your locality; pray for those with the responsibility of dealing with them

### Pray for the Local Borough Council:

1. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brian Spencer and his deputy, Councillor Suzanne Knight
2. The Council Executive members and their departments
3. For local councillors as they represent the needs and aspirations of their electorate
4. The Chief Executive Carole Hudson and her team of officers
5. The Council's 8400 employees, all working to deliver its services
6. For wisdom for councillors and officers in utilising the £200 million budget of the Council

### Pray about the need for:

1. Safety on our streets
2. High quality services for the elderly, vulnerable adults, young people and children
3. Wise decisions about investment and regeneration projects
4. Council to work closely with other agencies and partners in promoting the well-being of St Helens residents
5. SHINE representatives to be able to contribute meaningfully to Council groups (Local Strategic Partnership groups) of which they are members

*For further meditation and prayer: Deuteronomy 28:1–14; Luke 20:24, 25;  
Romans 13:1–7*

Use these Scriptures to give you more ideas for praying this week.