

# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Emmanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024 - DAY 22

## God With Us: In Community

Suggested Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:16 (고린도후서 6:16)

"I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

하나님의 성전과 우상이 어찌 일치가 되리요 우리는 살아 계신 하나님의 성전이라 이와같이 하나님께서 이르시되 내가 그들 가운데 거하며 두루 행하여 나는 그들의 하나님이 되고 그들은 나의 백성이 되리라

### Prayer

문상면, 캘리포니아 알테시아에 있는 생명샘 교회 담임목사

By Sang Myeun Moon, a pastor at Lifestream CRC in Artesia, California

*Korean*

우리는 살아계신 하나님의 성전:

교회는 이 세상에 있는 모든 건물 중에서 가장 아름다운 곳입니다. 주님의 몸된 교회의 건물이 화려하고 웅장하거나 아니면 예술적인 모양을 하고 있기 때문에 아름다운 것은 아닙니다. 교회가 이 세상에서 가장 아름답고 향기나는 곳이라고 생각하는 이유는 교회가 진리의 기둥과 터이기 때문입니다. (딤후 3:15)

주님, 어두운 밤에 바다를 향해하는 배가 길을 잃어버리지 않고 안전하게 향해할 수 있도록 하는 등대처럼 주님의 몸된 교회가 세상의 빛이 되는 교회가 되게 해 주시옵소서! 우리가 살아가는 이 시대는 점점 진리에 대하여 목말라 하지 않습니다. 진리에 대하여 분별력을 상실하며 살아가도 전혀 감각없이 살아가는 시대입니다.

주여! 주님은 우리를 교회라고 부르셨습니다. 우리로 하여금 교회가 교회되게 하셔서 분별력을 상실하며 살아가는 자들에게 빛이 되게 하시고 나침반이 되게 하여 주옵소서. 특별히 북미주 개혁교회가 이 소명을 잘 감당할 수 있도록 일깨워 주시고, 2024년 총회를 통해 총대들이 우리가 하나님의 성전이라는 것을 기억하고,

심의함에 있어 서로 경청하고 존중하게 하시며 분별력을 더하여 주옵소서. 우리 안에서 두루행하시는 하나님의 역사를 보기 원합니다. 다뤄지는 모든 사안이 하나님의 뜻대로 인도함 받게 하여 주시고, 우리가 깨어있어 세상 사람들로 하여금 교회가 진정 하나님의 집이라는 사실을 깨닫도록 해 주시옵소서.

## English

We are the temple of the living God:

The church is the most beautiful of all the buildings in this world. The buildings of the Lord's body, the church, are beautiful not because they are colorful, magnificent, or artistically shaped. The reason I think the church is the most beautiful and fragrant place in the world is because it is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

Lord, as your body, the church, we can be a light to the world, like a lighthouse that enables a ship sailing on the sea in the dark night to sail safely and not get lost! The age in which we live is increasingly getting lost in the sense of thirst for the truth; this is an age in which we live with numbness, lacking discernment about the truth.

Lord, you have called us the church. Help us to be the church, to be a light and a compass to those who are living in a state of loss of discernment. Help the Christian Reformed Church in North America in particular to fulfill this calling, and help the delegates to Synod 2024 to remember that we are God's temple, to listen to and respect one another in our deliberations, and to be more discerning. We want to see you walking among us. May we be guided by your spirit in every matter we address, and may we be vigilant so that the world may realize that the church is truly your temple.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation 성찰 및 대화를 위한 질문

- Do you believe you are the beautiful church of God?  
당신은 자신이 아름다운 하나님의 교회임을 믿습니까?
- Do you give others a fragrance of the church of God that gives them hope through your life?  
당신의 삶의 모습을 통하여 다른 사람들에게 소망을 주는 하나님의 교회로서의 향기를 주고 계십니까?
- Do you believe that the beautiful power of the church filling all things is dwelling in you?  
당신 자신에게 만물을 충만하게 하는 교회의 아름다운 능력이 함께 거하고 있다는 사실을 믿으십니까?



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Emmanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024 - DAY 23

## God With Us: In Community

Suggested Bible Reading: Romans 15:5-7

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

### Prayer

*By Pablo Kim Sun, senior leader for antiracism and intercultural conciliation for the CRCNA*

Creator God,

In your infinite grace, you've shown us the path of endurance and encouragement through Christ Jesus. We approach you now, seeking the strength and humility to embody these virtues, aiming to foster unity and love within our community, with a keen ear for the voices of the marginalized. Grant us, O Lord, the mindset of Christ Jesus toward one another so that our thoughts, words, and deeds may mirror his boundless love and acceptance.

As we endeavor to live in unity, cherishing our diversity rather than seeking uniformity, guide us to glorify you in harmony. In our differences may we see the splendor of your divine tapestry, masterfully crafted by your hands. Encourage us to welcome each other with the grace and mercy Christ has shown us, acknowledging your image in every person. Teach us to let go of any thoughts and practices that hinder true acceptance, and grant us the wisdom to discern and abandon those barriers.

Throughout our faith journey, remind us of your constant presence, guiding and supporting us through every challenge and joy. Let our fellowship serve as a

testament to your everlasting love, drawing others into your embrace, where eternal joy and peace abound.

Lord, in accepting one another, may our united praise glorify your name. Let our shared testimony shine as a beacon of hope in a world yearning for your light. In all we do, let us honor you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose companionship is our most cherished blessing.

In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- Do your thoughts, words, and deeds toward others mirror God's boundless love and acceptance of you? In what areas do you need to be further transformed by the Holy Spirit in this?
- Where do you think you can grow in welcoming others with the grace and mercy Christ has shown us, acknowledging God's image in every person?



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Emmanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024 - DAY 24

## God With Us: In Troubles

**Suggested Bible Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

### Prayer

*By Marc D. Nabie, who has worked with Reframe Ministries since 2015 as French ministry director. He lives in Burkina Faso, his native country, and is a graduate of Faculté Jean Calvin in France. He and his wife, Jocelyne, founded New Alliance Church of Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou, with branches in five villages. Spreading the good news of Jesus through media and training church leaders are his passions.*

*French*

Dieu notre Père, nous te remercions pour la grace de t'appartenir, et d'avoir été sauvé de nos péchés par l'oeuvre de Ton Fils, attesté dans nos coeurs par le Saint Esprit, par lequel, nous crions, Abah Père. Merci de ce que nous sommes déjà assis la haut en Christ, au dessus de tout domination et situation. Cette réalité, visible par les yeux de la foi, fonde notre espérance, alors que nous luttons contre vents et marées dans ce monde. Nous ne sommes point abandonné. Donne nous d'abonder en actions de graces, au milieu des épreuves auxquelles nous sommes soumis, souviens toi de nos frères et soeurs partout dans le monde qui luttent et souffrent pour leur foi. Aide nous à donner un sens à nos douleurs, et à te confier nos blessures, parfois corporelles, émotionnelles ou spirituelles. Rend nous ferme dans la foi, face à un monde de plus en plus injuste, de plus en plus braqué contre

tes voies. Que nos yeux restent focalisés sur l'invisible, et nous ne perdrons point courage. Nous prions pour le Synode, afin qu'il soit encouragé dans sa mission, malgré les défis, à continuer de proclamer le *sola scriptura* (l'Écriture seule), *sola Christus* (Christ seul), *sola fide* (la foi seule), *sola gratia* (seulement la grâce), [et *solī Deo gloria* (Gloire à Dieu seul)]. Nous t'avons ainsi prié au Nom de Jésus Ton Fils bien aimé, Amen.

### *English*

God our Father, we thank you for the grace of belonging to you, and of having been saved from our sins by the work of your Son, attested in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father." Thank you that we are already seated with you in Christ, above all rule and authority. This reality, visible through the eyes of faith, is the basis of our hope as we struggle against all odds in this world. We are not abandoned. Give us to abound in thanksgiving, in the midst of the trials to which we are subjected. Remember our brothers and sisters all over the world who fight and suffer for their faith. Help us to make sense of our pain and to confide our wounds to you, sometimes bodily, emotional, or spiritual. Make us firm in faith, facing a world that is increasingly unjust, increasingly turned against your ways. Let our eyes remain focused on the invisible, and we will not lose courage. We pray for synod, that it may be encouraged in its mission, despite challenges, to continue to proclaim *sola scriptura* (*scripture alone*), *sola Christus* (*Christ alone*), *sola fide* (*faith alone*), *sola gratia* (*grace alone*), [and *solī Deo gloria* (*glory to God alone*)]. We pray to you in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son. Amen.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- How does having an eternal perspective shape the way you face earthly, temporary struggles?
- Often our struggles do not seem "light and momentary." Some of our burdens seem heavy and can last for years. Ask the Father to give us a bigger perspective on what may seem able to consume us, and to assure us that nothing can separate us from his love.



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Immanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024 - DAY 25

## God With Us: In Troubles

**Suggested Bible Reading:** Psalm 27:1-6

The LORD is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me  
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes  
who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me,  
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,  
even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask from the LORD,  
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,

to gaze on the beauty of the LORD  
and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble

he will keep me safe in his dwelling;  
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent  
and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted

above the enemies who surround me;  
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

# Prayer

*By Nate Van Denend, the pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ontario*

Think about all the idiomatic phrases we use that include the concept of light. “Shine some light on this.” “Let me enlighten you.” “Clear as day.” “That was a lightbulb moment for me.” We use words like *brilliant* and *bright* to describe someone who is intelligent. Light has to do with knowledge, wisdom, and insight. God speaks light into existence first so that God’s will and God’s purposes for the world can be seen and known by that light as creation unfolds. As Synod 2024 approaches, let us pray for light, God’s light, to make visible the way forward for the Christian Reformed Church.

Here is a condensed and modified version of a prayer John Calvin wrote, called “Prayer before the Day.” It is a prayer asking for the light of God to dawn as it did on the first day of creation, so that God’s purposes for our lives can be seen and known. Note the references to light in bold.

My God—my Father and Preserver—who in your goodness has watched over me during the past night, and brought me to this day, grant also that I may spend it wholly in worship and service. . . . Let me not think, or say, or do a single thing which tends not to your service and submission to your will, that thus all my actions may aim at your **glory** and the salvation of my brothers and sisters. . . .

As you are **giving light** to this world for the purposes of external life by the **rays of the sun**, so enlighten my mind by the **effulgence (brilliantly bright light)** of your Spirit, that he may guide me in the way of your righteousness.

I entreat of you, O Lord, **not only to be my guide and director for this day**, but to keep me under your protection to the very end of life, that thus my whole course may be performed under your superintendence. . . . [May] you add daily more and more to the gifts of your grace until I wholly adhere to your **Son, Jesus Christ**, whom we justly regard as the **true Sun, shining constantly in our minds**. . . . Forget, and out of your infinite mercy, forgive my offenses, as you have promised that you will do to those who call upon you in sincerity.



Grant that Synod 2024 may hear your voice in the morning because we put our hope in you.

Show Synod 2024 the way in which we should walk, since we have lifted up our souls unto you.

Deliver Synod 2024 from spiritual enemies, O Lord; we have fled to you.

Teach us to do your will, for you are our God.

Let your good Spirit conduct all the delegates to synod onward to the land of uprightness.

Amen.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- What are the confusions, the darkneses, and the mysteries in the deep of your life into which you need God's light to shine?



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Emmanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024 - DAY 26

## God With Us: In Troubles

**Suggested Bible Reading:** Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

### Prayer

*By Tristin Mun, who writes, "I attend All Nations Church in the San Fernando Valley, which is north of Los Angeles. Our church is a Korean American church that has Korean and English ministries. I attend the English ministry with my mom, dad, and my older sisters. I also attend GM (God Made), which is a ministry for special needs. I am on the autism spectrum, so I participate in the therapy service. In the past two years I have been blessed and have become a helper for the little ones. I'm filled with the Holy Spirit when I do this. Thank you, Jesus, for giving me a purpose at church!"*

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank you for all the struggles you have helped me to overcome. Psalm 46:1-3 says you are "an ever-present help in trouble," meaning that you help me when times are tough. Because of your grace, I overcame stressful times and issues with my autism. I thank you for empowering my parents with the Holy Spirit to power through my language and behavior problems. The way my life is going, I can feel the Holy Spirit fill me for the glory of God.

I still have a long way to go, so I ask that you continue to help me through the struggles in my life. Though I am not perfect, you helped me use my autism to help others like me, even though it took time to overcome challenges with talking and behaving well. Thank you for filling me with the Holy Spirit and keeping me close to you. Please continue to bless my fellow special-needs friends at GM.

Currently I'm learning to become a teacher's assistant for the little ones. I thank you for allowing me to support and nurture them as they grow. I overcame some of my struggles, and I would like to help the younger kids overcome the same issues I faced. God, please continue to help me overcome my difficulties so that one day I may become a role model for others like me. I pray all this in your name.

Amen.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- How can we pray an honest prayer about the struggles in our lives?
- In what areas of our lives do we need faith that God will use each of us through the power of the Holy Spirit?



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Emmanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024 - DAY 27

## God With Us: In Love and Joy

Suggested Bible Reading: 1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

### Prayer

*By Al Postma, executive director-Canada for the Christian Reformed Church in North America*

*Note: First John is a letter that is saturated with love. It reminds us that our love for others directly flows from God's love for us, and that God's love took a very active form in sending Jesus to die and rise for us and for our salvation. Since our love for others flows out of God's love for us, our love should give evidence that we are in Christ.*

Loving God,

As we approach Synod 2024, we ask that you continue to shower us all with your love. We ask this for delegates, support staff, members, leaders across our denominational community, and ourselves. Remind us of your graciousness to us and of your atoning, life-changing work that you gave to us so freely even when we did not deserve it. As we experience the full force of your love, make us channels of your love to others. May it be that when others experience us, they experience you. As we love one another in all that we say and do, may your love be made complete in us. Amen.

# Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- We prayed, “May it be that when others experience us, they experience you.”  
What do others learn about God through you?
- Ask the Holy Spirit to impress on your heart the depth of God’s love for you.  
Then reflect on how that can overflow to others.



# GOD WITH US

*"...And they will call him Immanuel"  
(which means 'God with us')."*

—Matthew 1:23

**SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024 - DAY 28**

## God With Us: In Love and Joy

**Suggested Bible Reading: John 15:9-1**

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

### Prayer

*By Emily Zuidema, a third-year nursing student at Dordt University and a member of First CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa*

Loving Father,  
Your care for us is all encompassing. It is deep and true and rich, bringing us rest in you.

Your handiwork is so full of joy—creation shouts your name and is brought to fullness through your order. God, help us to bear fruit through following your commands.

It is so easy to love at times; remind us to embrace those moments.

We thank you for sweet notes left in lunch boxes. We thank you for snowy driveways scooped by neighbors. We thank you for coworkers who bring us coffee on particularly long days. We thank you for Sunday dinners around the table and for the conversations they come with. We thank you for held hands and lingering hugs when we need them most.

You call us to love others at all times and in all places. Lord, please help us to surrender our selfishness, and forgive us when we fall short. Our true joy comes from complete service to all of your people—not just those with whom we find it

easy to get along. God, grant us empathy and patience, and guide us in all of our interactions with your imagebearers.

Father, we love your law. Help us to live in accordance with it and to praise you in all we do.

Amen.

## Questions for Reflection and/or Conversation

- In keeping God's commands, we remain in his love. Jesus tells us this so that our joy may be complete. Where have you experienced joy in keeping the Lord's commands?
- What do you need to confess and repent from in order to experience the fullness of joy in him?