



Formation Devotional

January 2, 2020 Morning

Forming Worship, Life, and Ministry Together at Christ Covenant Church

Enter this time expectantly, knowing that God delights to reveal himself to you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 59:16)

Opening Prayer

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 206)

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father, we are thankful that your mercy is higher than the heavens, wider than our wanderings, deeper than all our sin. Forgive our frivolous attitude toward life, our callousness toward suffering, our envy of those who have more than we have, our obsession with creating a life of constant pleasure, our indifference to the treasures of heaven, and our neglect of your wise and gracious law. Help us to change our way of life so that we may desire what is good, love what you love, and do what you command, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and respond in gratitude according to the assurance of grace.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Praying the Psalms

Pray the psalm back to God as you read through faith in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 3

Save Me, O My God

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

1 O LORD, how many are my foes!

Many are rising against me;

2 many are saying of my soul,

“There is no salvation for him in God.” *Selah*

3 But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,

my glory, and the lifter of my head.

4 I cried aloud to the LORD,

and he answered me from his holy hill. *Selah*

5 I lay down and slept;

I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid of many thousands of people

who have set themselves against me all around.

7 Arise, O LORD!

Save me, O my God!

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;

you break the teeth of the wicked.

8 Salvation belongs to the LORD;

your blessing be on your people! *Selah*

New Testament Reading

Matthew was written for a Jewish audience. That's why he starts his gospel with a genealogy. Tracing the lineage of Jesus back to David would be significant to a Hebrew who was wondering if Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. In that light, Matthew's references to the Old Testament reminds us that Jesus is God's fulfillment of the Jewish law and the prophets. The Sermon on the Mount becomes the new identity for the people of God.

Meditate on the passage, noting a few words or a phrase that stood out, or a promise to meditate on throughout the day. Take them to God in prayer.

Matthew 2

The Visit of the Wise Men

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." **3** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

6 "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." **9** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11** And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Flight to Egypt

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." **14** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Herod Kills the Children

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. **17** Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

18 “A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

The Return to Nazareth

19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Prayers of Intercession

Church Community

- Pray for Christ Covenant’s youth and children’s ministry leaders: for joy, compassion, and energy as they serve the church and the city.
- Pray for the global church, especially for Christians in Latin America: protection from drug-related violence, the prosperity gospel’s false promises to be exposed, and Bible-based teaching.
- Pray also for Christians in North America: for unity that transcends ethnicity, college ministries to reach international students and those falling away from faith, and boldness against spiritual complacency.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Wonder what your next step in spiritual formation is? Consider getting involved in a Growth Group.

For a handy guide to the devotional elements and an archive of past issues, visit ccotc.org/devotional.