

Church Together

A Church Prays In Times Of Difficulty

11th January 2026



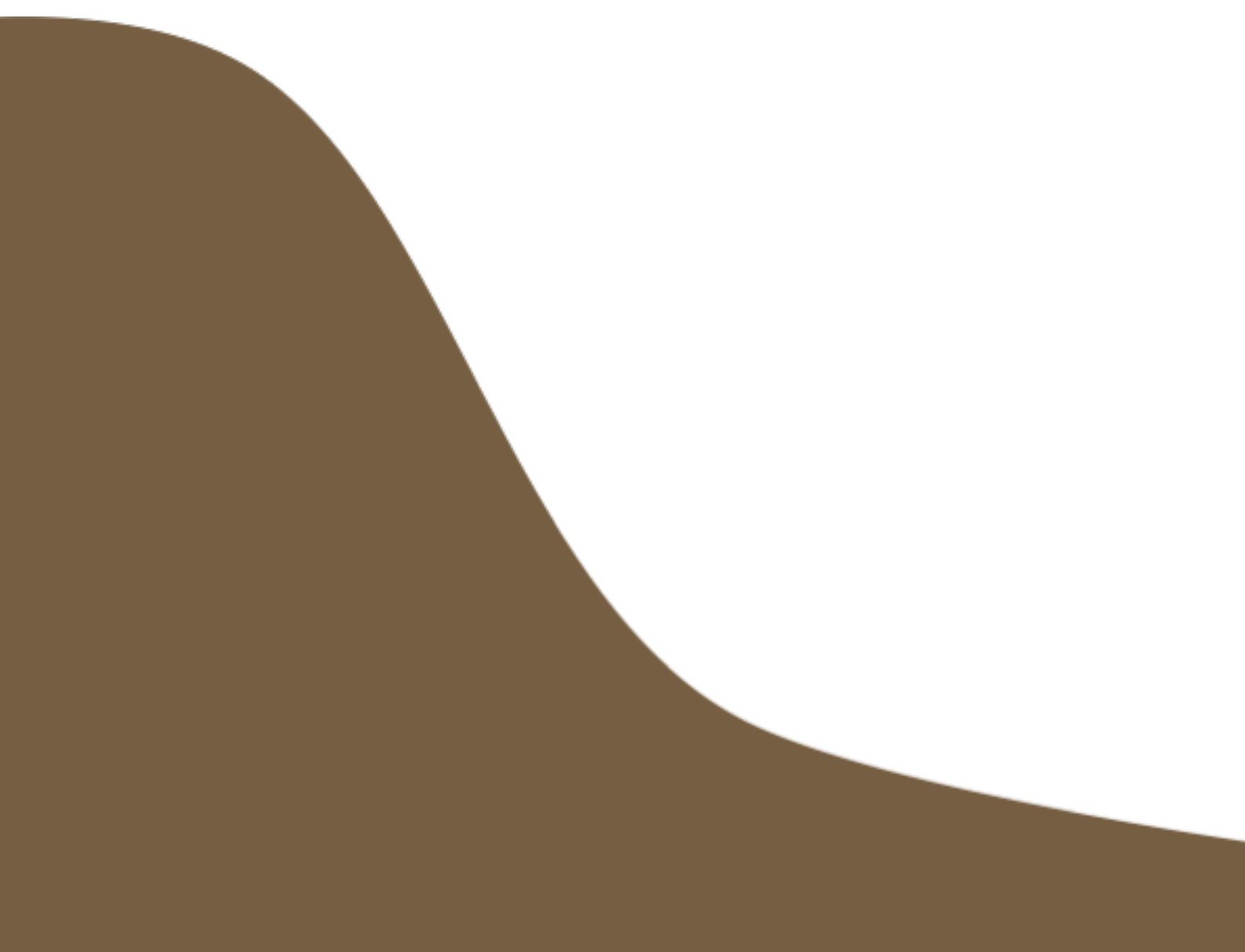
Welcome

In today's Service we will be looking at: **2**

Thessalonians 1 v. 1 - 12

The theme for our service today is: **A Church Prays In Times Of Difficulty**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today's service and that you would be able to **Know That When Life Is Tough, We Can Always Pray!**



Call To Worship

Psalms 23 v. 1 – 6 NLT

The Lord is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams.

He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths, bringing honour to his name.

Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.

You honour me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

Song Suggestion

Be Still For The Presence Of The
Lord

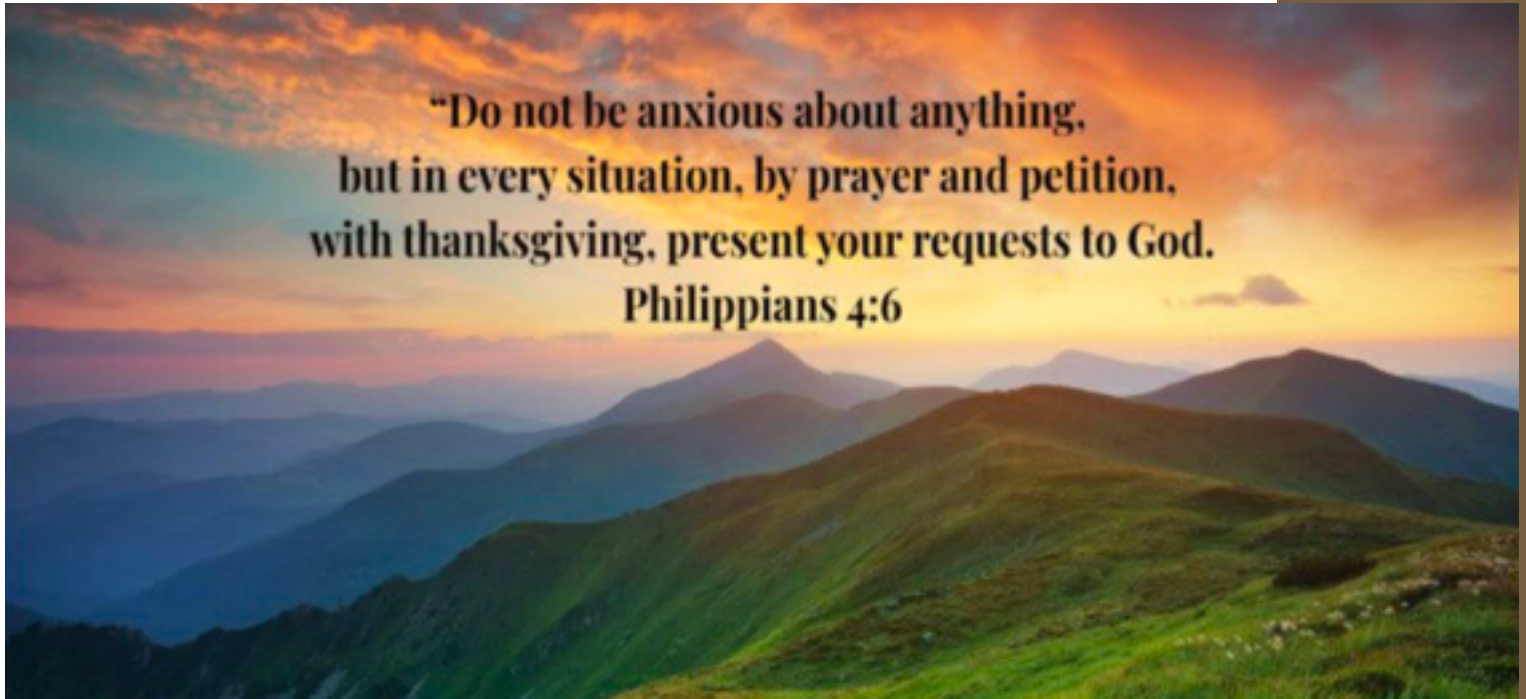


Opening Prayer

Lord God, creator of all things, for your love for humankind: for your love for each person: for the great and mysterious opportunity of life: for the life of your Spirit within us: for the gifts of your Spirit: we praise and worship you today; Lord Jesus.

Amen

**“Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
Philippians 4:6**



Bible Reading

2 Thessalonians 1 v. 1 – 12 NIV

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.


11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his

power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Song Suggestion

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah



A person with long blonde hair, wearing a pink dress, stands in a field of tall grass with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or prayer. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The person is seen from behind, looking towards the horizon.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

Church Together

Thought

For every Christian, there must surely be situations in which praying seems the only thing to do. In desperate times we turn to God for help and comfort, and rightly so. This is one form of prayer, one that is almost instinctive, but the New Testament writers give examples of the church at prayer which give us a wider picture.

After Jesus' resurrection all his followers met together for prayer as we read in **Acts 1 v. 12 – 14**. The disciples' reaction after the appearance of Peter and John before the High Priest and the Council was to turn to God in praise and thanksgiving, and to pray for even more boldness in speaking out the gospel news, despite the threats from the Council!

Paul, as he writes to the Christians at Thessalonica, knowing that they are under attack, prayed, not for relief from their troubles, but for power for them in their Christian lives. Paul seemed delighted with his Thessalonian converts as we are told in **2 Thessalonians 1 v. 3, 4**. Despite considerable persecution, the young church was forging ahead in both faith and works. Paul and all the disciples knew that without prayer nothing would succeed.

The success of the church, both in Jerusalem and in Thessalonica, was no accident. It was the result of a commitment to prayer. In Jerusalem, the first Christians began in prayer, as we see in **Acts 1 v. 14**, continued in

prayer, as portrayed in **Acts 2 v. 42** and turned first to prayer in tough times as recorded in **Acts 4 v. 24** — and they grew in numbers and in faith!

In Thessalonica, the church's faith was supported by Paul's prayer for them, as we see in **1 Thessalonians 1 v. 11 – 12**.

Paul prayed constantly and regularly for these little groups of Christians around the eastern Mediterranean. News and queries were brought to him by faithful fellow Christians, either by word of mouth or by letter, and just as faithfully, Paul replied to their questions and addressed their problems. In the letters from Paul which have survived, we have a fascinating, if incomplete, picture of the beginnings of the Christian church, as well as guidance and encouragement for us in our own church situations. The churches in both Jerusalem and Thessalonica prayed in the face of persecution. What does this say to us as we face difficult situations either in our own lives, our churches or even in world events? Today, certainly in the western world, the church faces total indifference rather than active oppression. But individual churches, and their members, often face many problems. Is prayer our first reaction to these problems? Do we open our hearts to God in petition, praise and thanksgiving? Do we sit down and chew over the problems amongst ourselves and only then release them to God?

Paul prayed alone for all his converts, but he also undoubtedly prayed together with his companions — Silas, Barnabas, Luke and others whose names we do not know. God's power seems to be released as we pray, and the determined and heartfelt prayers of a dedicated group can be extremely powerful.

Thessalonica was a violent place for Christians, where

there was physical hostility. Christians were misrepresented and falsely accused as we are told in **Acts 17 v. 4 – 9**. Most strategic places are possessed with difficulty if not with danger! So, in those circumstances, what does Paul pray for the church that he founded?

FIRSTLY, HE PRAYED A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Prayer should be in the context of praise for what God has done, as seen in **v. 3, 4** and for who God is, as reflected in **v. 5 – 12**. Paul gives thanks for their faith — the Greek word ‘auxano’, which is found in **v. 3** means ‘to grow’, so ‘huperauxano’ is ‘to grow more and more’, the intensified, strengthened form.

Paul also gives thanks for their ‘love — agape’, as seen in **v. 3** which is a word to describe a new attitude to others; an attitude born within Christian fellowship and impossible without the Christian dynamic. It is unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodwill.

He also gives thanks for their ‘perseverance — hupomone’ as mentioned in **v. 4** and which is the spirit which not only endures the circumstances in which it finds itself, but masters them.

SECONDLY, HE PRAYED A PRAYER OF PETITION

God had an agenda in mind when he called us. Christianity begins with God not us. He takes the initiative; he makes the first move.

ILLUSTRATION

On the first day of January 1739 there came an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon John Wesley and sixty of his friends, including his brother Charles, and George Whitefield. They had met in Fetter Lane Chapel. The entry in Wesley’s journal says: ‘About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God

came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of his majesty we broke out with one voice, 'We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.' George Whitefield wrote in his journal: 'It was a Pentecostal season.' It was indeed. It was the outpouring that preceded the revival and, according to the historian Lecky, saved England from the bloodbath that swept through France in the French Revolution.

One of the effects of rediscovering the reality of the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit is knowing God's power, in Greek, his 'dunamis'.

ILLUSTRATION

In Greek mythology, one of the labours of Hercules was to clean the stables of Augeas. In them Augeas had stabled 3,000 head of oxen for 30 years, without ever once cleaning them out. It was Hercules' task to clear away the vast accumulation of filth. He did not even attempt to do it himself. He deflected the course of two rivers so that they flowed through the stables, and their cleansing power did what no human effort could have done! The Holy Spirit links a man with a power far greater than his own, and that floodtide of cleansing and renewing does for him what he himself could never do.

God wants to see the 'Jesus' life' being lived out in us and through us.

Prayers Of Intercession

God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands. You are closer to us than the air we breathe. Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world. Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light inside ourselves. Renew in us a sense of joy, painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation.

God of grace and compassion our hearts are full of gratitude as we think of the many blessings in our lives:

The gift of faith to believe in you, the love of family and friends, for shelter, clean water and plentiful food, for access to education and health care, for the freedom and speech and the freedom of movement.

As we turn our attention to the world, may we never lose sight of the fact that we are all connected because of what Jesus has done for us. The success and failure of others is our success and failure. The suffering and joy of others is our suffering and joy.

We understand that the privileges that we enjoy are your will for all people and we grieve for those who don't share these basic human rights. Help us, as we struggle with the ever – present ambiguity of our faith, to see your compassion, and keep us aware of our responsibility to reach out in compassion to those whose lives are a constant struggle for survival.

Lord God, we pray for our community:

For teachers as they bring to fruition their preparations at the beginning of this new school term. For healthcare and social workers in their mission to improve the wellbeing of those who are sick and unwell. For those in the armed forces as they prepare for their next challenges in a dangerous world. For volunteers, carers and those who undertake work for which they are not paid. For our church today and in the coming weeks as we seek to discern your will for our future here at Salendine Nook. Lord, guide and inspire our community, in all that we do this week and beyond.

Lord, in deep gratitude, for this moment, this place, this world we give ourselves to you. Take us from here later loving Lord, to live as changed people, because we have been touched by the living Lord, and cannot remain the same when we have met with you. Ask much of us loving Lord, expect much of us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. Living Lord, accept our lives and accept our prayers this day and every day. You have the words of eternal life and in you we trust.

Amen

Song Suggestion

Breathe On Me, Breath Of God



The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, forever and ever.
Amen

Tithes, Gifts & Offerings



If you feel that you are able to, then please keep on giving to the work of the church here at Salendine Nook, with a generous and cheerful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.

Amen.

Song Suggestion

O Lord My God! When I In
Awesome Wonder



Blessing

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Ephesians 3 v. 20, 21

Amen