



**ST ANDREW'S/ST JOHN'S  
PRAYER MONTH  
JUNE 2018**

**FROM OPEN DOORS WORLD WATCH LIST 2018**

“Each year, Open Doors publishes their World Watch List to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians around the world. The list represents believers in Jesus Christ who are arrested, harassed, tortured — even killed — for their faith.”

In 2018 St Andrew's/ St John's will join Open Doors invitation to pray for Persecuted Christians and in obedience to Jesus' command to us in Matthew 5:44 to pray also for the persecutors - because they are persecuting Christ (whatever you do to a person in Christ, you do also to Him). At His dying moments, Jesus asked the Father to forgive them because they didn't understand what they were doing. Help us, by the strength and grace of the Holy Spirit, to do the same.

As we read about the following countries, let's image ourselves in their place

## SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE

### 1. North Korea

#### ***“North Korea: The Hardest Place To Follow Jesus***

*This has been the most dangerous country to be a Christian for 17 years. North Koreans are forced to worship the Kim dynasty and nothing else.*

*Anyone connected to Christianity is arrested, tortured and even killed. Despite this, the underground Church is growing with an estimated 300,000 Christians in North Korea.*

#### ***The Cost Of Christ***

*North Koreans are indoctrinated to worship the Kim family. Children are taught to report their own parents' activities. Christian parents often don't tell their own children about their faith in Jesus.*

*There is a North Korean saying: "Wherever two or three are gathered together, one is a spy." Some believers memorize their Bible, then destroy it. Others carefully hide their Bible and only read it when they're truly alone.*

*If Christians are caught, they're sent to labour camps. Their entire family will be arrested – found guilty by association. Some may not know anything about Christianity or that their relative is a believer. Many still take the risk to follow Jesus; there have been reports of underground churches in these prison camps”.*

#### **How We Can Pray**

“Pray for North Korean believers who are languishing in prison camps, and for the proclamation of the gospel both in and outside the prison walls. Also, pray that Christians in the country would have access to Bibles and fellowship.”

Pray for the guards and officials who are indoctrinated or fear-filled to carry out these tortures – that they might see in the Christians, as Jews saw in Stephen at the time of his torture and execution, the shining glory of Jesus.

Pray for the government that these hate-filled and pride inspired laws might change

Pray for Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un that God will soften his heart and that the Holy Spirit will move in North Korea to bring peace and harmony into that society and respect and care for the world. Thanks to God for the talks that are occurring between countries.

Pray for world leaders that their response to the current rhetoric will be wise and God inspired and that further talks between western leaders and Nth Korean Leadership will be pure and their word their bond.

## SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE

### 2. Afghanistan

#### ***“Afghanistan: Risking Everything For Jesus***

*Afghanistan is a Muslim country. The Islamic State and the Taliban control over 40% of the country. The only local Christians are converts. New Christians are considered to be insane for leaving Islam. If they won't recant, they may end up in a psychiatric hospital, be beaten or have their houses destroyed. Believers lose their lives if they follow Jesus openly.*

#### ***Violence And Islamic Extremism***

*Converting to Christianity brings shame to a Muslim family. They'll do everything in their power to bring a new Christian back to Islam. This can involve violence. However, some families witness the life-changing power of Christ. There have been cases where entire families become Christians and are forced to flee the country.*

*The influx of Islamic extremist groups has resulted in many deaths. In 2017, there were at least 8,000 casualties, according to the UN. They especially target Christian foreigners living and working in the country. Believers are forced to live out their faith in secret.”*

#### **How We Can Pray**

“Pray for believers in Afghanistan who lack the opportunities for fellowship, especially new converts who fear telling anyone about their faith in Christ. Also, pray for those who lose worldly possessions to persecution when they gain eternal life. Pray that they would be able to forgive their persecutors to the glory of God.”

Thank you for the blessings we have in this country. Blessings of stable government still held accountable for their actions. Thank you that we can worship in fellowship together without fear of losing our homes, our livelihoods and our freedoms we understand that this is a blessing from You.

We remember Your exhortation to the Israelites in Deut 30:15 – 20 to follow Your commands and to love You and this comes with a promise “...I have set life and death, blessing and curse, before you. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live”. When the Israelites forgot God and allowed the lure of other gods to turn their heads, God could no longer look on them.

Thank you for the blessings we have of so many comforts. Remind us not to forget You in what we have; may we never forget that all good things come from you and to share with others less fortunate. Forgive us when we allow those “things” to become our gods. We dedicate ourselves to you and to stewardship of all that you have given to us. In Jesus name and for God's glory

## SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE

### 3. Somalia

#### ***“Somalia: No Place For Christians***

*Somalia is one of the most hostile countries for Christians. Islam is the state religion. Muslims suspected of becoming Christians are targeted by extremists. In 2017, 23 people suspected of converting to Christianity were killed by al-Shabaab. In a country with only hundreds of Christians, this shows how hard it is to follow Jesus.*

#### ***Persecution From All Sides***

*Civil war has left communities full of violence and corruption. Lawlessness has allowed Somalia to become a safe haven for Islamic radical groups. Communities grow more aggressive and intolerant towards Christians, not only in Somalia but also in the surrounding region. Over the years the situation has worsened. Islamic militants have intensified their hunt for Christians in positions of leadership.*

*Society expects that all Somalis are Muslims. Any celebration of Christmas is banned. Any conversion to Christianity is regarded as a betrayal of Somali family and clan. If Somalis are suspected of being converts, family members and clan leaders will harass, intimidate and even kill them. Women are pressured to comply with al-Shabaab’s way of life. They’re forcefully married off to Muslim men, often beaten and put under house arrest.”*

#### **How We Can Pray**

“Pray for Christians in Somalia who risk martyrdom if their faith is discovered and struggle with keeping it to themselves. Pray that they would have wisdom and discernment in sharing the gospel with others, along with a quiet boldness and sense of God’s presence with them.”

Pray for those who give in to the temptation to use religion as a means of acting out violence and atrocities against others. Lead them and us not into temptation, but deliver us all from the evil one. When there is a lack of understanding of the scripture, please let resulting actions not be against Your will and send teachers to clearly explain Your truth. We have seen that Your people, Israel, twisted Your message to the point where even Jesus, the Messiah they were looking for, wasn’t understood.

It is easy to be deceived when we do not take the time to study Your words by the grace of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Father please allow us to seek Your peace through Your grace and may all our fears be dissipated by the greater power of the knowledge of Your love – in Jesus’ name.

## SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE

### 4. Sudan

#### ***“Sudan: A Country Divided***

*In 1983, Sudan became an Islamic Republic. Civil war followed. In 2011, the country was divided in two: Sudan and South Sudan. Many Christians fled to South Sudan. In Sudan leaving Islam is punishable by death. Many are too afraid to share the gospel with Muslims for fear of being accused of blasphemy against Islam.*

#### ***Family and Faith***

*Christians from a Muslim background experience the worst persecution. They're arrested, charged with crimes they didn't commit, and their churches are demolished. Church leaders are intimidated, threatened and pressured to hand over their church. Over 20 churches were recently closed.*

*Those who leave Islam to follow Jesus often won't tell their children about Jesus. Their children may accidentally reveal their secret belief. Children could also be severely harassed at school. Christians even bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries to avoid revealing their family's faith.*

*There are no proper laws that protect Christians. Islamic extremists continue to become a larger threat, and it is expected the persecution will only continue for believers in Sudan.”*

#### **How We Can Pray**

Pray for Christians in Sudan who risk martyrdom if their faith is discovered. Pray that they would have wisdom and discernment in sharing the gospel with others

Pray for those who give in to the temptation to use religion as a means of acting out violence and atrocities against others. Lead them and us not into temptation, but deliver us all from the evil one. When there is a lack of understanding of the scripture, please let resulting actions not be against Your will and send teachers to clearly explain Your truth. It is easy to be deceived when we do not take the time to study Your words by the grace of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Father please allow us to seek Your peace through Your grace and may all our fears be dissipated by the greater power of the knowledge of Your love. As You have commanded us, may we never judge another. We understand that we don't know how we would respond if facing the same circumstances. We see a warning of this in Peter's response at Your trial; You know us but we don't know how we will react until such circumstances come our way.

# **DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING**

**SATURDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE**

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH**

**9.00am TO 5.00pm**

**The church will be open, with Elders in attendance to lead prayer for those choosing to join in group prayer – for those wishing to prayer silently the pews have Bibles and are available.**

**All welcome to come and go as you please**

## **Please note warning:**

If you would like to fast during this time but you have a medical condition, please be sure to check with your doctor before going ahead and do not attempt this without your doctor's approval.

If you do wish to fast **and** are medically safe to do so, drink plenty of fluids such as:

water, fruit juice and tea with honey if you choose.

**These will also be available to share at the Church throughout the day for those attending**

## **Prayer points will include:**

**Praying through the Biblical passage – 2 Timothy Ch 2 – point by point in light of our persecuted brothers and sisters and our personal response to living lives to God's glory today.**

### **Followed by**

1. Prayer of thanks for our new minister and for an upholding of the Haleys as they have moved on
2. Pray for the congregation of Young as they now seek your will for a new minister there – raise up the person you have chosen and sustain that congregation through this journey
3. Pray for Tim to be strong in his faith and for protection from harm both spiritually and physically
4. Pray for Susan and the children as they support Tim and settle into their new community – may each one of them be strengthened by you and find your will in this place
5. Pray for the congregations of St Andrew's & St John's to love and support each other and to maintain prayerful support of Tim and his family
6. Prayer for some of the countries on the Open Doors Watch List
  - North Korea
  - Afghanistan
  - Somalia
  - Sudan
  - Pakistan
  - Syria
  - Iraq
  - Iran
  - Yemen
  - Eritrea
  - Libya
  - Nigeria
7. Pray for any whose faith is weakening
8. Pray for those who don't yet know you
9. Pray for those who are seeking to exclude You from society and our schools and who claim that the good works of our laws are not from Your Holy Spirit but from some sense of self- righteousness.
10. Pray for all who are sick
11. Pray for unity amongst Christians particularly in our congregations
12. Pray for God's guidance and will in our Bible studies, small groups, student lunches outreach, open church jumble sales and service initiatives
13. Pray for the spirit to move in our churches and in this city and for our faith to be upheld
14. Additional prayers ..... (as lead by members)

