

THE ORISON

ôr'ĩ-sən -(n.) prayer, petition, to speak to God

Prayer petitions from the NTC Center for Church Development

The Center for Church Development invites you to pray for the following seven petitions this month. You may pray for one each day of the week, or all seven each day. Please print off this page and/or keep The Orison at hand where you pray.

A Call to Prayer for our Mission Field

PRAY FOR THE CCD'S
UPCOMING EVENTS. MAY
GOD USE THESE
TRAININGS TO EQUIP THE
SAINTS FOR MINISTRY -
EPH. 4:12

Rethinking Pastoral Transitions

The Center for Church Development is excited to offer our first ever **Spark Tank** innovation funding event.

Do you have an idea for reaching new people, that is innovative, makes new disciples, and that you would like to get some funding for?

Then submit your application for an opportunity to pitch your idea to a group of peers in the NTC for a chance to receive a grant. **Grant awards range from \$2500 - \$15,000!**

All ideas will be screened and the selected semi-finalists will present their ideas to a group of Sharks who will decide whether to award a grant and the amount. In addition to funding, Sharks will commit coaching time per project they fund.

For complete details go to ntcumc.org/ccd or contact Ministry Coordinator, Jessica Vargas at Vargas@ntcumc.org.



- **WARREN UMC** - Warren UMC has faced many difficulties in this pandemic, and the snow storm from this past February devastated their facilities. Warren UMC is currently congregating at the Dallas Bethlehem Center. Pray for the leadership and congregation of Warren UMC as they continue to reach their mission field in this difficult season.
- **New Spaces in the New Year** - Pray for God to inspire pastors and laity to gather new faces in new spaces and new ways in 2022.
- **NTC CLERGY** - Numerous studies across all denominations show that pastors are struggling along with so many congregants and congregations. Pray God to grants pastors renewal and that we the colleagues, laity, and leadership of NTC pastors discover new ways to support our pastors. Our mission field desperately need strong and healthy clergy.
- **Families with empty chairs this holiday season:** Pray for members of the NTC churches and those in our mission field who will be facing the absence of a love one during the holidays.
- **Casa Linda UMC** - Casa Linda is an example of a bold congregation that many years ago embarked on reaching a mission field of a different demographic than the existing congregation. Over the past 20 years, Casa Linda has been a leader in Latinx ministries. Today, like many congregations, Casa Linda faces new challenges. Pray for God to guide Casa Linda as they continue to seek to serve their mission field.
- **Those who have yet to return to church** - Studies show that approximately a third of Christians in the U.S. have stopped going to church since the pandemic began. Pray for many to come home for Christmas. They still need the church, and we and our mission field still need them.
- **Those who sow division** - Many statistics show that division and hostility are increasing in all segments of society. Pray that this season of celebrating the birth of the Christ Child may bring greater unity, that hearts may be softened, and that those whose hostility is so obviously intertwined with loneliness and resentment may encounter the Prince of Peace in this season and a more unified church and society may emerge.

Christmas Reflection from The Director of the Center for Church Development

The only thing in life that all have zero influence over is the circumstances of our birth. I have occasionally reflected that if I had to choose the family to be born into (other than my own), which family, which historical period, and what circumstances, I am not exactly sure which family and what circumstances I would choose.

Only one person in the history of humanity had the opportunity to choose birth circumstances. That person is God incarnate in Jesus Christ. As God had authority to select any family in any circumstance throughout history in which to be born, I find telling that God chose a family that most would not choose.

God chose to be born into a family that was not wealthy, was forced by the government while heavy with child to leave their home to be registered in a census, was rejected by an innkeeper and others to be forced to give birth among livestock, and was forced to cross borders at night and evade governing authorities with a small child. Who, while having the option to choose the circumstances of their birth, would choose these circumstances? God.

I believe God chose such difficult birth circumstance so that in the difficult circumstances we experience and in the difficult circumstances witness others experiencing, all may know that God understands and is with us all. May God help us tell and live the Christmas story for our mission field. The world needs to know Emmanuel, God is with us!

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas,



Dr. Owen K Ross, Director