

**“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team**  
**For the week of December 11, 2016**

***A Heart of Compassion***

*Those of you who know women in Coffeebreak are aware of the deep struggles that face several of the community women who attend. While reading this week’s selections from the Advent devotional, “From Heaven Above” by Michael Hoy (copies are on the table in the Fireside Room), I was struck by the one titled “A Heart of Compassion,” which seemed to address that situation very well. We’ll return to reflections from “Time Out in Tough Times” on January 1. —Stu Johnson, editor*

**READ:** With great compassion I will gather you . . . with everlasting love I will have compassion on you.  
*Isaiah 54:7-8*

**REFLECT:** Compassion means, literally, *suffering with another*.

Jesus, seeing the crowds, had compassion on them because he could see they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus would reach out and heal others because of his deep compassion. Jesus would have compassion on the multitudes who were hungry and needed bread to eat, and in his compassion, he fed them. Jesus in his great compassion gave his life for the sake of the world, and gathered his flock together under his compassionate arms.

Compassion was at the heart of our Lord who came down from heaven for us. He came to suffer for us. This compassion is rooted in the gift of love that God brings, an everlasting love that will share our weak and mortal state until we are all made whole.

God does not fear this suffering. God embraces it in the very birth of our Lord.

**PRAY:** *Compassionate Lord, you have made our hearts and our weaknesses your own. Through your suffering with us, you have gathered us together in love. Help us to be people of compassion for others.*

**ADDITIONAL PRAYER PROMPTS**

- Pray for the women in Coffeebreak, especially those with serious needs. Pray that the Lord will meet them in those needs, that they will know Christ’s compassion through others. Pray also for concerns about the future in light of our succession planning, that God will provide the support these women need.
- Use the Pause to Pray as a guide to focus on other concerns through the week. Copies can be found in the lobby and in the Archive section on the website ([evbapt.org/archive](http://evbapt.org/archive)). The full Pause to Pray is used in our Wednesday prayer time. An abbreviated version appears in the Sunday bulletin.
- Reflect on this week’s worship service—the music, Scripture, Nimrod Tica’s message\* “Don’t Lose Your Voice”—that all will help as you go through this week; for your own walk with Christ, and that you may be a blessing and witness to people you have contact with during the week.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services and to become engaged in spiritual discovery with the people of Evangel in other ways as well. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection and compassion with others to enable that engagement this week.
- Pray that God will bless our succession planning efforts. Pray for the Lord’s blessing on the Negotiating Team as it works with a church in Wheaton that made an offer to purchase our property (we plan to use the proceeds to establish an Evangel Missions Legacy Fund to continue our commitment to missions for 8-10 years). The Negotiating Team is meeting on Tuesday (December 13) to discuss refining our counter-offer following a meeting this past week that helped narrow the discussion of terms of the potential sale. Pray for wisdom and continued evidence of God’s providence in this process.

\* A podcast of the sermon and PDF files of other material will be posted on the website by Monday.

*Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday, posted on the website ([evbapt.org](http://evbapt.org)), with printed copies available in the lobby.*

*To be included in the weekly e-mail, use the Contact Us form on the website and request “add me to the Prayer Vigil list.”*