

“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team

For the week of January 1, 2017

Fruitful Trees (Psalm 1) – thoughts for the new year

As Evangel faces change in 2017, we recognize how important prayer has been—and will continue to be—as we participate in the unfolding of God’s plan. For our Touch Points in 2017, we return to “The One Year Book of Praying Through the Bible” by Cheri Fuller (Tyndale, 2003), which was first used in 2013-14. We will focus on one selection for each calendar week, picking ones that are most appropriate to Evangel and its people.

READ: They delight in doing everything the Lord wants; day and night they think about his law. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail. Their leaves never wither, and in all they do, they prosper. *Psalm 1:2-3*

REFLECT: This psalm, in which the wicked are contrasted with the godly, never fails to lead me to prayer—both for others and for myself. It is also the source of an ideal prayer for the new year—that we would delight in doing God’s will, that his Word would be continually in our thoughts, and that we would bear fruit in the year ahead and in each season of our lives. None of this happens apart from God’s Spirit and power working within us. But fruit bearing is the inevitable by-product of opening our hearts and lives to the power of his life within us. As we abide in Christ and his Word, our roots go down deep in Christ, keeping us close to him, just as the roots of trees planted along the riverbank sink into the water source so that their leaves stay green and don’t wither. And when we pray, the Spirit releases this wonder-working power that draws us to God, roots us deeper in him, and causes our faith to mature. Be assured of God’s promise that as you draw near to him today and each day in the year ahead, he will draw near to you (James 4:8).

PRAY: *Lord, by your Spirit, draw me to the river of your love. Cause my roots to go deep into your streams of water, and make all that I do prosper. Give me the desire to read your Word and to meditate on it day and night. Most of all, empower me to do what it says. And for the fruit that is borne in the year ahead, I will give you all the glory!*

QUOTE: A man without prayer is like a tree without roots. *Pope Pius XII (1876-1958)*

ADDITIONAL PRAYER PROMPTS

- 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). 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, the songs and reflections in our New Year’s hymn sign—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 or more). An update will be given during a Ministry Moment in the worship service next Sunday (January 8). Pray for wisdom and continued evidence of God’s providence in this process.

Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday, posted on the website (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.”