



Dear St. John's,

Wow, have I missed you! One of the greatest joys of my sabbatical was the opportunity to pray for you in such beautiful and holy places. From Ireland to Costa Rica, your names were never far from my lips as I gave thanks for you and the relationships we share. I, too, felt your prayers as I journeyed through my sabbatical. What a gift to be connected to one another through the gift of prayer!

Beginning this Sunday, September 7th, we will have even more opportunities to pray together as we go back to two services (8:00 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.). As this new season begins, I want to address some concerns I've been made aware of regarding praying for church and national leaders by name. I have thought long and hard about this and believe it's important we continue praying for our leaders by name for a couple of reasons.

First is tradition. Praying for leaders by name is part of our Anglican roots. In the Church of England, it has long been standard practice to pray for the monarch and national leaders. We inherited this practice in 1789 but obviously adjusted it to reflect our own political system. Praying for our leaders connects us with those who have gone before us. I have yet to meet a generation who hasn't faced abuses of power, injustices, or a broken system and yet, they prayed because prayer grounds us. Prayer reveals our need for grace and God's intervention, especially for those who lead. When we pray for leaders, we're also reminded that the work of seeking justice, promoting peace, and fighting for the wellbeing of others isn't their work alone – we, too, are responsible for sharing in that work.

Second and more importantly, it's scriptural. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 reads, "*I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions...*" The bible encourages us to pray for rulers and those in authority asking for God's will to be done. The early Church did this even under hostile governments (remember the Roman Empire?!?), as a witness to God's sovereignty and a call to peace. In a polarized society, praying for leaders by name, regardless of political view, is a countercultural act of unity and hope. **It reminds us that the Church's loyalty is ultimately to God, not a party or nation.**

Former Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, once said, "*to pray for those who are in leadership is to actually unleash energy that absolutely has its source in God and that may touch the human spirit in some way.*" We pray because prayer ultimately changes us. It keeps our hearts open and the needs of the world front and center. We pray for leaders specifically because they need them, just as much as you or I do. We pray because prayer leads to action. We pray because God is listening.

I look forward to praying with you in the days to come, friends. As always, if you'd like to share what's on your heart or any joys/concerns you may have when it comes to our communal prayer life, my door is open.

I remain prayerfully yours,
Amanda+

GROW IN GOD, ACT IN SERVICE, WITNESS IN LOVE

321 W. Chestnut Street, Lancaster, PA 17603

Telephone: (717) 299 – 1188

Website: www.stjohns-lancaster.org