

**Prayer of the Week:**

*O Lord God, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

*(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Eighteen)*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*

**FAITH PROMISE**

Supporting Nazarene Missions & The World Evangelism Fund

**Faith Promise Sunday**

September 6th, 2020

**Intro**

The word “missions” brings up all kinds of feelings. For many, the feelings are positive. You remember hearing amazing stories of God’s work around the world and you maintain a passion for that work today.

For others, missions may bring up memories of missionary speakers who brought items from around the world. While casually interesting, it all seemed so far from removed from your everyday world that you have little interest.

No matter what feeling it may bring up for you, I invite you into a time of discovery this morning. As a Nazarene Church, we have the opportunity and privilege of supporting the work of Nazarene missions through Faith Promise giving.

Nazarene Missions Centers around compassion, evangelism, and education.

## **Compassion**

All Gospel work must begin with a heart of compassion.

Jesus announced the purpose of his ministry in Luke 4:18-19, "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed, free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*"

We could spiritualize this passage and talk about our enslavement to sin, blindness to the Gospel, and spiritual oppression of the Enemy. These things are real, and it is appropriate to talk about Jesus' work in these ways. But, let's not forget that these are also very real and tangible things. The ministry of Jesus and the announcement of the kingdom of God must be received as good news for the imprisoned, poor, oppressed, and infirmed or it is not good news at all!

Missions in the Church of the Nazarene begins with compassion. Around the world we have disaster response, hospitals and clinics, work and witness teams, and compassionate ministry dedicated to showing compassion around the world. May we not only support that work of compassion, but participate in it in our own community.

## **Evangelism**

Evangelism is a scary word. Many feel obligated by the word. Others feel guilty. Others may feel "woke" and are past such "archaic" ideas.

And yet, since the first disciples met Jesus on a shoreline, people outside the movement of Christianity have been drawn in.

Evangelism acknowledges that the Jesus movement exists for everyone and invites people into this movement.

Evangelism programs and methods meant to convince are a fairly new phenomenon in the church and only were necessary when the witness of our lives was no longer compelling to people outside the movement.

Evangelism is built first on the transformed life of the believer.

*"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."*  
-2 Corinthians 3:18

Evangelism is built on a willingness to honor the culture of the people.

Our evangelistic efforts fail when we try to erase or overcome culture. Christ is Lord over ALL the nations and just because others worship in ways that are different or foreign to us does not mean that they are any less valid.

## **Education**

Education and discipleship is about giving people tools to work out what it means to be the unique people of God in their place and time. Of course, there will be many similarities between the lives of Christians around the world, but theology and Christianity must always be worked out within a context.