



**ALASKA 2022
PRE-TRIP
DEVOTIONAL
PACKET**



Jeremy Zoet
616-886-1620

John 20:19-22

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

This passage of Scripture occurs after Jesus' death on the evening of his resurrection. The disciples are locked inside a house and yet Jesus is able to enter (miraculous!). He proves to them that he has come back to life by showing he is the man who was hung on a cross and has the marks to prove it (miraculous!). He offers a greeting of peace and then relates how God the Father had sent him to earth (miraculous) to reveal the kingdom of God and save all those who believe in him to how he is sending them. Their journey is not over yet. Even after experiencing Jesus for years and then witnessing his resurrection, there is more. He sends them to bear witness to what they have seen. Then he breathes on them, reminding us how God breathed into "man" to bring him to life in Genesis 2:7 (miraculous!) and with that breath, breathes the Holy Spirit into them. They are sent with the Spirit of God.

And so are we. We are being sent. Can you believe it? We are 35 days away from going to Alaska! We might all think we've made this decision on our own to go on this trip (or maybe your parents made the decision?), but at the same time we are being sent. We are being sent by God and by Zion Reformed Church. God already knew who would be going on this trip as God created the world (miraculous!). How could God not know everything and still be God, right?!

God has chosen each one of us to go on this trip. We each have something unique to contribute. And everyone has already contributed before we've even departed! We have the opportunity to hear from God through each person's devotional. Some of us will have more words than others in our devotional, but more words doesn't mean better or worse. God can speak to us each day (miraculous!) leading up to this trip through each devotional. And that is what we need most. We need God to speak to us, for the Holy Spirit to speak so that we are prepared to be sent to Alaska to do God's work. We have no idea what that future will hold, which could be scary, but it should be exciting and life-changing if we hear God speak to us and let God prepare our hearts and minds before this trip.

Prayer: Lord, speak to me each day as I prepare for this mission trip. Prepare my heart and mind so that I may do your will on this trip. Thank you for this group, for the devotionals they have written that will help us focus on you. We want to know you and serve you with all that we are. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Emerson Leistra
616-570-7113

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

This makes me think of the song with these exact words that we would listen to in children in worship. I remember really enjoying it and it was one of my favorites. I really liked it because showed how to please God. And that was something I struggled with when I was younger because I didn't really understand the unlimited love thing.

This passage means you should love God with everything you have and not hold back.

Dear God let us remember to love God like he loves us with everything we have
amen

Gods comfort to struggling

Hannah Frost
([616-213-4989](tel:616-213-4989))

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

Thoughts: some people are egocentric, some people are timid and shy. Some people are outgoing, while others need comfort in everyday situations. Despite these saying, and despite there might not be a clear cut connection. Everyone has one thing in common. Struggling. And even in the happiest times, there is still that fear of struggling and the uncertainty. On the mission trip, there can be a lot of anxiety, if you are ever feeling like that, on this trip. I want you to think to yourself that no matter what it is, God is always right there besides us, we can ask him to take away our fears, help us.

Challenge: I want you to try this challenge. Whenever you have time during the day. It can be either, in the car listening to music. Eating, five minutes in your free time, whenever I want you to try this. Ask yourself what are you struggling with, what are your fears that consume you. Once you have these in your mind, ask God to help you with these fears, anxiety. Allow him to calm your heart and know he will always be there even in the darkest moments. Because he truly loves us.

Prayer: Dear Father, you love us so much that you died on the cross for us. Many people struggle and I'm sure you have struggled as well. Allow us to be in control of our struggles and fear, allowing us to go to you, pray so that we may not be afraid just as you have asked. Allow our hearts not to be troubled as we are on the mission trip. And allow this trip to go on splendidly so we may have to best times out of our lives, making so many wonderful memories while serving you.

God's Melody

Rachel Eriks, 616.403.4317, adam.rachel.eriks@gmail.com

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” –Hebrews 11:1

We have a sign that I love hanging above our piano:

“Teach me the melody as you write my song.”

The sign is a constant reminder of how I want to live my life and where my strivings should be. It reminds me that God is in charge of my life, that I am HIS, not my own. It reminds me that God already knows all the music for my “song,” and that even though I don’t know what’s ahead of me or how “long” my song is going to be, I can trust that He does and that He already knows every key change, minor chord, and tempo of the whole thing. That is so cool, and yes, a bit scary too, but that’s where faith has to come in. God is somehow using our lives to create a melody and song unique to us and His plan. When we stop to think about that as Christ-followers, there is so much hope and peace. He knows us, He sees us, He loves us.

Questions:

- So I am wondering, what part of our songs God will be teaching you and me on this mission trip?
- How might He invite a new melody into our song or combine our tune with others on the mission trip (or in our everyday, normal lives) to make something beautiful in His sight?
- How might He call us into a new movement of our song or change the key signature on us to keep things interesting, and maybe push us out of our comfort zone?
- How will we respond to God when he asks us to change our tune? Will we go kicking or screaming or in humble submission to Him?
- What about when he asks us to combine our melody with someone new or someone who is different from us?

Prayer:

God, our Father, help us to submit control of our lives to you, to have faith that at every part of our lives, from the “mundane” moments to the great big Alaskan adventures, you are with us, patiently teaching us the melody you’re writing with our lives. You love us, and you can use each one of us in your plan.

Sacrifice For God

Kendall Deleon

616-570-1462

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Song

[Living Sacrifice](#)

As you listen to this song, think of and write down some of the ways you can be a living sacrifice for God while on the trip. Brainstorm things you can do while working with people to show God's love and how he works within you through service.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you that you have blessed us with the opportunity to go on this trip and be a living sacrifice for you. We pray that you guide us to do everything for you and let our bodies be holy and acceptable to you. We pray that within you we can help so many people and resemble your love to them.

Gods amazing ways

Noah zondervan

(616)-265-6163

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV) “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your god...”
I see how this passage reassures you that even though you might be going through a hard time, God will always be with you no matter what. You don't ever have to fear losing God because he will be with you every step of the way even when it gets hard. If you power through the hard times you will get to the light on the other side and find whatever god has planned in your future.

Prayer: Dear God, I hope that you help us to all find your plan for us on this trip and to work through us to help out those in need. I hope you show everyone that it is an amazing thing to help those in need or the kids who might not have found you yet. I pray that you use us all in amazing ways and leave none of us untouched. In God's name, amen.

A few years ago when we went to Chicago it showed me the ways that God can work through people and how much the people helped are grateful for all God had done for them. It is amazing to help out those in need even if it takes lots of time of work it will always be worth it in the end. We spent the trip helping to pick up areas that were dirty, we weeded a church's lawn, and helped out around town wherever help was needed by the community. I hope that God will work through us again like that in Alaska.

The Ways of the World

Josh Sanders

616-717-2568

Our world can be a challenging place. We are constantly hit with the good and the bad things. Whether you're following the news, social media, or just listening to a friend's story you can hear all kinds of things. Stories that make you happy or sad. Stories that make you mad and want to take action. Stories about actions that bring glory to God and those that don't. We can be tempted to be brought into the things of this world. Advertisements, TV shows, our friends all at times can work to either pull us towards or away from God.

Proverbs 1:10 tells us, "My son, if sinful men entice you do not give in to them." The things of this world can seem nice or fun in the moment. But there is a price to be paid for our sin. There is regret and shame. If we follow God's ways there is none of this. Proverbs 1:33 says, "but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease without fear of harm." We should all try our best to constantly strive to walk God's path. This is what we are called to do.

Prayer: God, help us to walk your path. We confess that we have gotten distracted by other things that have pulled us from you. Bring us back to your path and help us to do your will. Amen.

Surrender

Olivia Zoet

Phone Number: (616) 848-9569

“I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”

Psalms 40:8

This Bible verse goes very well with the song “[I Surrender](#)” by Hillsong United. It talks about our desire to do everything for God and for God to make a way in us.

The chorus in the song says, “I surrender, I want to know you more.” These lyrics really speak to me because I long to know more about God every day. Surrendering is what God wants from us. So let's desire to do God's will by surrendering to God before this trip, on this trip, and after this trip.

Dear God, as we prepare to go to Alaska, I pray we open our hearts to surrendering all to You, even if we feel hesitant to. Help us to surrender our worries and fears about the trip to you and on the trip help us to grow in our faith. Amen.

Erin Eriks

2027eeriks@jpsonline.org

Finding Courage

The LORD tells us this, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Everyone has felt nervous at one point in his or her life, but courageous people can overcome their fears and continue to take action.

Now listen to the song [No Longer Slaves](#) by Bethel Music.

This song reminds me that God is always in control even if I am nervous or afraid. There are two different parts in this song that really speaks to my devotional though:

1. “I am no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God.”

This speaks to me because it says forget about the fears, and remember who you are. We are from an almighty, everlasting God.

2. “You split the sea so I could walk right through it, my fears were drowned in perfect love.”

I feel that this part is really important because even though the sea is parted, we will always be drowning, but it will be in **LOVE** and protection from God.

What is one of your fears about our trip?

How will you overcome that fear or your nerves in general?

Dear God,

Please help us find courage throughout our whole trip. I pray that even if we get nervous or scared, we would remember **whose** we are first. I pray that you will keep us safe, healthy, and energetic. Amen

Taylor Kilyanek
616-610-0835

Blind Love, But Not Invisible

1 Corinthians 13:4-6

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Thoughts:

The passage I chose includes what love should look like. Read the passage again, thinking more deeply about what love really is.

I have recently been struggling with some of my friendships from my school. I need to look deeper though and see that I'm surrounded by many amazing people, including God who truly loves me the way this passage describes love. I challenge you to think about how we should love God, each other, and the people we meet on this trip.

Prayer:

God, allow me to find friends on our mission trip and help me to love others the way you do. Help me to make friends with people from our church and people we meet on our trip. Please help me and prepare me to do this and to step out of my comfort zone.

Abby Hart

Phone: (616)-610-5212 | Email: abby12heart@gmail.com

Listen to “Never walk alone” by Hillsong Worship

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

One thing that we need to remember on this trip is that God is always with us. We are there to do God’s work. Even when the times get hard or you are just losing strength remember that God is with you. The chorus of Never walk alone says,

I have never walked alone
I’ve never been abandoned
You’re my inheritance
You are my strength and shield
And I have confidence
You go before me
You’re my deliverer
And I know I’ll never walk alone

These words and that verse remind me that even in the hard times, God is there. So when the times get tough and I feel like I’m all alone, God is there. We need to remember that on our trip.

Prayer:

Dear God, I just want to thank you for always being there. Even when we start to doubt of just am losing the strength to go on. Please watch over all the people going on this trip and give them the strength to do your work and the courage to go on. Amen.

Depending on God

Caleb Brower (616-284-1123 or 2027cbrower@jpsstudents.org)

Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.

In vain you rise early
and stay up late,
toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to those he loves.

Psalm 127: 1-2

[Cornerstone](#)

How are you depending on God in your life? _____

How can you help grow your trust in God? _____

How can you grow in your relationship with God? _____

God, you are the almighty creator of the world. I ask you to build my life, may you be the cornerstone and center of my life. May you help me to be humble on what must be changed, save me from the temptations of this world and help me to run away from them. Amen.

Living with our own Freedom
Ella Bond
(616) 745-2201

1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

As I was doing my one page a day devotion in a book called “Be Still and Know”, I came across a passage called “Free to do what?” and it struck my attention. It made me realize that oftentimes we do nice things for one another because we think we have to or learned it from our parents. In reality, we should be using our own freedoms and rights to choose to love and help one another. The book asked the question, if given a whole day of freedom without any rules, limitations, and commitments, what would you do with it? Our selfish tendencies tell us, go to a spa, party like you never have before, or shop till you have no money left. We never look to the side of ourselves that says, let me go down to the daycare or homeless shelter and help cheer up and provide for people in need. We have so much to be thankful for in our lives and we need to look deep inside and ask ourselves what will really make us happier inside? Before we go to Alaska, I want to ask you some challenging questions to think about.

1. What can you do now to prepare your hearts and minds for loving unselfishly when meeting new people and kids in Alaska?
2. Is there something in your life right now preventing you from loving and caring for others fully?
3. Are you willing to fully surrender and use your freedoms to do the right thing rather than what you want?

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing this passage to me and helping us realize that we should use our freedoms to love and care for one another. I pray that we can think about this in preparation for Alaska and that you will speak to us about where you want to lead us. Help us use our talents and gifts to impact the people we meet and help them become closer to you. I pray that we would put our full hearts into all we do in Alaska.

A Sinless City

Noah Brower: 616-727-0173

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. **3** No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5** There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22: 1-5

This passage reflects what the Kingdom of Heaven will grow to be: a city free from the chains of sin and flooded with justice and righteousness. To me, this is a comforting thought that one day Jesus will come again and bring about this “sinless city”.

Scripture tells us how to reflect the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth many times. A few examples include:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. -Micah 6: 8

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” -Matthew 22: 37-38

So how does this apply to the mission trip? Well, if our goal is to reflect the Kingdom of Heaven, and the two passages above tell us how to do so, then we must do it! Here are some questions that may help us think about how to reflect these ideas.

What is something I can do to love my neighbor? _____

How can I ‘act justly’? _____

What can I do to love God on this trip? _____

Dear God,

We pray for everyone we will serve and be serving with on the mission trip. We pray that servant’s hearts will come out of us and that we will reflect the Kingdom of Heaven in our actions. Amen.

Who Am I

Garrett Farney

Phone: (616) 238-1615

Over the past year I have spent a considerable amount of time asking myself who I am and what my purpose is in this world. When I begin having these thoughts, I find the song “Who Am I” by Casting Crowns to be a reminder of my identity. This song asks the question, “Who am I that the Lord of all the Earth would care to know my name.” It states that it is not “because of who I am” or “because of what I’ve done.” It is because “I am yours.” I encourage you to listen to this song today as a reminder of who you are in the eyes of Jesus.

Song: “Who Am I” by Casting Crowns

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1: 12-13 NIV

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8: 28 NIV

As we move into this busy season of mission work and as we return home, I encourage you to think about who you are and what your purpose is on this Earth. It can become easy to find an identity in things outside of Christ such as sports, music, work, and friends. Remember that in the eyes of the Lord you are a child of his.

Lord, I thank you for those going on this mission trip and I thank you for the opportunity to join in your work. I pray that through this week and for the lifetime ahead of us, we do not lose sight of who we are. I pray that we remember that we are yours God and that each of us here knows that we have an identity in you.

Fire In My Soul

By: Josh Verbrugge

Phone# - (616) 406 4639

Song:

- Start a Fire By: Unspoken
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrEzr-rWwe8>

Bible Verses:

- **Matthew 5:16**
"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."
- **Psalm 39:3**
"My heart became hot within me. As I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue:"

Thoughts:

- As we go off to Alaska how are **you** going to fan the flame in your soul? How can **you** prepare yourself? How are **you** going to let God's light shine through **you**? Let's have a trip of no regrets! Throughout all these new and exciting experiences glorify God in everything **you** do!

Prayer:

- Dear God. I pray as we go off to Alaska that we will have a trip of no regrets. I pray for calmed nerves for those anxious, for safe travels, and good health. Thank you for the opportunity to go on this trip and I pray that through us, you will "Start a Fire" for all to see. In your name we pray Amen.

Adam Eriks - 616.403.3664

Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

I really like using lists when I need to feel productive and get a number of tasks done either at work or at home. Fold the laundry, check. Update the budget, check. Read the Bible, check. The only problem with the last item is that I might have switched an activity that builds my relationship with God into a duty that I need to perform.

Now don't get me wrong, there are days that I'm not feeling particularly into the Bible or it is a busy time of life and by building the discipline into my schedule to read the Bible I have helped strengthen a healthy daily routine. However, around a year ago, I was feeling convicted that I wasn't taking time to listen to God, and the way I went about rectifying that situation was to read the Bible in a year. As an aside, there is a great reading plan on the YouVersion app by Nicky Gumbel that I would recommend. The one problem that I found myself falling into was that even though I was listening to the devotion and the Bible passages I wasn't engaging with them fully. I had lost what had drawn me to reading the Bible, listening for God's voice.

As demonstrated by the passage above, I think that Martha fell into the same sneaky trap. She wanted to be with Jesus. She wanted to spend time with Jesus. But she got distracted by doing things for Jesus and lost sight of the original reason Jesus was over in the first place.

Are there places in your life where you might have started with devotion and have had it become more of a duty?

Prayer: Lord, help us to seek after you with all of our hearts. Help us identify areas in our lives—and repent—where we are going through the motions or where we've replaced a relationship with You for religious activities. Thank you for your Son and the gift of knowing You. Amen

Trusting God

Devotional by Leah M. (331)238-3927

My devotional will be about psalm 40. These verses mean a lot to me. It is both me and my mom's favorite verses and I know them by memory.

I waited patiently for the Lord;
He turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.
Blessed is the one
who trusts in the Lord,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.
Psalm 40:1-4

In this scripture it talks about trusting God and how He helps us when we need it most. It says that God "gave me a firm place to stand". That part of this scripture sticks out to me because even though I might be nervous to go to Alaska and be without my family and be in a new environment God will be there with me when I am nervous. I can trust him to be with us on our journey.

Questions:

It also says in one of the verses "Many will see and fear the Lord". When I was younger I used to ask my mom what seeing and fearing the Lord meant. What do you think that means?

What do you think it means when it says "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God."?

Prayer:

God, help me to not be nervous on this trip and to remember who i'm serving and to help me trust in you god. Help us to praise you and teach others to praise you on this trip. Amen.

“Do not worry”

Ava Zondervan

Phone number: (616)-298-5506

Email: 2028azondervan@jpsstudents.org

Matthew 6:33: “But we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

This verse means not to worry about food or clothes because God will provide it for you. You don't have to worry about food because God provides enough so the birds don't have to go and hide away in barns. And you don't have to worry about clothes because even Solomon in all his “splendor” wasn't dressed as good as one of the flowers God had made in the field.

Song: “Do not worry” by Ellie Holcomb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhbK2GpbKTY>

This song reminds us that we don't have to worry about where our next meal will come from or what we should wear. God will provide it for us.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us as we go on this mission trip, help us meet new people and see new places. Let us have a life changing experience on this trip. Amen.

Away From Comfort
Kenzie Paul
616-723-3281

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

I chose the verse above because it talks about how we need to trust God and follow him, even if we are out of our element. I personally have a hard time stepping out of my comfort zone in fear of the unknown position that I'm being put into. During this trip to Alaska, we will all be pushed to try something new.

Prayer: Dear God, please help us as we step away from our comfort zones, and into Alaska. I hope and pray we can all learn and experience new things.

Let Your fear go

Reagan Davis
(616) 856-3951

Scripture: Now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. Romans 8:1-2

When we break free from fear. The enemy will often try to make us feel ashamed or upset about the ways that we let fear control us. We all have been through that. We let fear keep us from doing something fun. We even let fear keep us from doing something for god. So during our trip, I challenge you to let go of your fear, step out of your comfort zone and try something new.

Song: [Fear is a Liar](#) by Zach Williams

Prayer: Pray that you are able to let go of your fears and step out of your comfort zone.

Gods Guidance

By: Aiden Zondervan

Phone # (616) 212-6368

Email: Aiden.Zondervan@gmail.com

The lord says “ I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.” - Psalm 32:8

God thank you for the opportunity to go on this mission trip, thank you for everything you've done for me up until now, thank you for guiding me in all i've done.

Amen

I think this passage is fairly simple to unpack but do you really always apply it in your life? Like if you really want that certain promotion or *need* that new car you will work hard to get but does that mean god wants you to have it he might be guiding you to keep that money for a upcoming bill or giving that promotion to someone in a worse off situation than you but you would never know that because you think you need it, your desire for it clouds out reasoning and god trying to guide you.

[Cornerstone - Hillsong Worship \(Lyrics\)](#)

“Be Where Your Feet Are”

Samantha Eriks (616.337.0200/samantha.e.eriks@gmail.com)

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” -Colossians 4:5-6

Last summer, I had the blessing of learning many things alongside the amazing staff and kids at Camp Zion. One important lesson I learned from this past summer was the importance of being right in the moment and fully present with whoever I was talking to, whether it be a volunteer or camper. In a devotion before camp, we talked about being “right where our feet are,” focusing on loving people right where God placed us. I love this quote and the literal reminder it brings!

Throughout the school year, I’ve left the sign in my closet to remind me to be in the moment, not nervous about the future or regretting a decision from the past. Whether I am laughing with friends or solving a challenging problem at school, this idea of “being where my feet are” has been a great way for me to focus on making the most of where God has placed me.



My hope and prayer is that we can all be fully present in Alaska (and every day!) in whatever we are doing (growing deeper in faith through conversations with a friend, embracing God’s beauty in nature, or doing a task that is outside of our comfort zone with joy). When we are “where our feet are” and present in the here-and-now, God can use us in new ways to shine His light!

Like it says in Colossians, we are about to embark on an amazing experience together -- let’s “make the most of every opportunity!”

Dear Lord, I pray that you would help me to make the most out of every opportunity you provide me, both in Alaska and everyday. Help me to stay “where my feet are” and focus on what you are teaching me - no matter where I am or what I’m doing.

Amen.

God's love
Amaris Demaray
616-930-1433

Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I would love it if you listened to “Reckless Love” by Cory Asbury.

The reason why I chose this song is that this song is what I listened to when I went through my depression, During my depression, I really started questioning God if he loved me, why would he put me through all of that pain. During my Depression, I really lost faith in God and It was hurting me alot. But this song talks about God's “ Never Ending, Reckless love of God.” This one verse is what got me through all of the pain, I found my place and my relationship with God has never been stronger. Before I went through my depression my relationship with God was there but not strong. After battling depression my relationship with God has grown tremendously.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you so much for this chance to go to Alaska and help and serve others who are struggling or just need an extra hand. I pray that Anyone who is going through pain and suffering looks to you and welcome the lord into their hearts, for you to give them the extra push they need. I pray that we all have a safe but hard-working trip and for us to travel safely. Amen

“God Heals What the Devil Brings”

By: Abby Ursiny

Phone #: (616)-329-9558

Psalms 107:19-20: “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them.”

I have a story but it's not so much a personal story as it was a story I heard that really stuck with me.

I was at my step sister's wedding not that long ago and my step dad was talking to one of his family members while we were waiting for our food. Well this man who he was talking to just got over stage 4 bowel cancer. The thing is though he did not take one antibiotic or have one procedure or even a single treatment to try and contain it. This surprised me greatly and for a second I didn't exactly believe him but I kept listening and heard what he had to say. What he ended up sharing was the fact that after the doctor appointment he didn't say a word about it to anybody but his wife and his parents. He didn't think about it or say a single word or even contact his doctor and ask for a check up. What he did instead was he woke up every day and still does an hour and a half earlier than he could spend time praying to God to get rid of it and remove his illness. After a couple months he felt new, he felt better than ever.

He went back to the doctor. The doctor looked at the test results and was shocked, he had never seen anything like it. There was not a single sign of his cancer. Like it was never there.

This bible verse represents this story perfectly. He cried to the lord for help. He got down on his knees and left it all to him. In return God healed him completely. So if your struggling in some way relating to this I really encourage you to take it to heart

Let's pray, dear God I thank you for today and your loving kindness. I pray to you, thanking you for healing the sick and protecting those from it. I pray that if anybody has these doubts about you healing them then you encourage them to give it to you and to let you heal them. Amen

Climb Every Mountain

Olivia Davis

(616) 217-1090

SCRIPTURE

Micha 4:2

Many nations will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”

The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

THOUGHTS

As we approach this trip there will be many “mountains” we need to climb, both mentally and physically. The mountains and scenery that we will see is all of Gods beautiful creations and he brought us to Alaska for a reason, a change in pace in our busy lives with drama, school and whatever is pressing on your mind this is a chance to pause and embrace what God is giving you. If you have any concerns or doubts just remember that God moves mountains and does everything for us and there should not be a doubt in your mind that’s this trip from God was given to us for a reason. I want you to listen to a song by Corey Voss called God who moves the mountains, and focus on the lyrics.

“You say speak, and we say, "move"

You say watch, what You can do

You say trust, and then You prove

You're the God who moves the mountains”

We trust in him and he proves, all we need to do is trust him and PRAY, pray for safety, for him to lead you throughout the week and provide for what you need on this trip.

Look up the song [God who moves the mountains](#) by Corey Voss

And think and pray about why God moves mountains for us!

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving us this opportunity to see your creations and reminding us how awesome you are. Please be with everyone on this trip to get something out of it and glorify you through everything we do. Calm our nerves and have us be present in it and with you
Amen

Love God, Love People.

By Rachel Verbrugge

Cell phone: (616) 258-3291. Email: Verbrugge.family@att.net

This past Christmas my work partner and I each received a gift of a personalized hat from a teacher friend in our building. For me, the teacher chose the phrase “Love God, Love People.” I’ve never had a favorite hat before, but now I do, and I’m sure you will see me wearing it in Alaska. 😊

God often uses Bible verses, Bible stories, random phrases and songs to grab my attention by having them pop up in my life in multiple ways from multiple people. Luke 10:27 has been this type of Bible verse for me this year, along with the word “kindness.” According to Luke 10:27 loving God and loving people is the greatest of all commandments.

²⁵ A religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. “Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?” ²⁶ He answered, “What’s written in God’s Law? How do you interpret it?” ²⁷ **He said, “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.”** ²⁸ “Good answer!” said Jesus. “Do it and you’ll live.”

When questioned further about who our neighbors are, Jesus shared a story about a man who had been mugged, beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. Both a priest and another religious man walked by and saw the man lying there in need of help but passed him by. Then a third person came along who not only brushed the injured man off and gave him a ride to town – but went the extra mile and hooked him up with a hotel room and some medical attention. After sharing the story Jesus asked,

³⁶ “What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?” ³⁷ “The one who treated him kindly,” the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, “Go and do the same.”

Love God, Love People. We can’t possibly love the Lord with all our heart and soul and mind and strength without having that passion overflow onto the people we come into contact with every day. Why? Because our God is love. (1 John 4:16). And if we truly love God with all of our being there will be a reflection of him in our words and actions. What does that reflection show? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness, faithfulness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

Love God, love people. Loving God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength can look like taking a big mission trip to Alaska and loving on people there, but don’t forget that we are given the gift of a mission trip opportunity everyday - both inside and outside of our homes. How can we best love our family, friends, coworkers, classmates, and the strangers we meet? Is our passion for God so deep that every interaction we have with another person, whether face to face or online, is a reflection of who God is?

Prayer:

Father God, thank you for this day. Thank you for all of the people you have placed in our paths, and the opportunities, both big and small, that you give for us to love on them. Show us clearly today how to love you with abundant passion, prayer, muscle and intelligence and also how to love all people as you would want us to.

FEAR

Emily Verbrugge

Phone number: (616)570-2433

Email- emilyverbrugge5@gmail.com

James 1:2-3; **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”**

Alaska is roughly 3,723.8 miles away from Grand Rapids, Michigan. This is a long distance for a mission trip especially for the 6th, 7th and 8th graders who were never able to experience a normal mission trip or didn't have a chance for a mission trip at all. Fear, It's what keeps a person motivated to keep going or makes them feel that they should give up. Fear is an overpowering emotion that can take control of a person's life.

Maybe you've heard of the bible verses about trusting God in the face of sin and fear. An example would be Psalm 23:4 which says, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.” or Deuteronomy 3: 22 which reads, “You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.” There are many other bible verses that are related to Fear and God always being there to give you strength and protection, but in the moments where fear grabs a hold of us it can be hard to remember that God will always be your strength and always guide you through.

I recently found this quote while mindlessly scrolling through instagram and decided to save it. “Do the thing you fear to do and keep on doing it... That is the quickest and surest way to ever yet be discovered to conquer fear.”- Dale Carnegie.

When we are in Alaska this summer, don't lose sight of the work God is sending you there to do. You might be scared and be fearful, but God will be right beside you walking with you every minute of every day. Don't miss the chance to do everything possible in Alaska because fear is holding you back. Have faith in the LORD and let him guide you.

Song: [“All The Poor And Powerless”](#) by Leslie Jordan and David Leonard

Prayer: Dear God, I just want to pray for everyone who is taking this trip to Alaska and even the people who aren't. I pray that we can leave for this mission trip and praise you miles away from home and do what you are calling everyone on this trip to do. I pray that everyone will have a good memorable trip and for them to grow closer to you. Amen

Feeding the Hungry

Kenzie Farney

(616) 427-8073

Read Matthew 14:13-21

13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. **14** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. **15** As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." **16** Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." **17** "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. **18** "Bring them here to me," he said. **19** And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. **20** They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. **21** The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

You might be thinking, "what more can I learn from a story I have heard a thousand times", but recently have been looking at this story in a new light.

This story is always titled "Jesus feeds the Five Thousand" but really he is giving the power to his disciples. See verse 16 where it states "You give them something to eat". Jesus is using the people who follow him and believe in his power to feed the people who are in need. How cool is that?! Jesus has blessed us as his sons and daughters to be able provide for the people we interact with. This could be actually providing food for the hungry or something as simple as lending a helping hand to your best friend or classmate.

This is going to be something we have many opportunities to do while in Alaska. Whether it be playing with kids at the summer camp, chopping wood, or touching up walls with paint, Jesus has blessed us to show his power and love to everyone we will run into.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us this amazing opportunity to serve you and your creation this summer. Give us the strength and ability to show your love and glory to everyone we interact with on this mission trip and in our regular lives.

Loving one another

Mason Hart. You can contact me at (616) 283-5742 or by email at masonhatr@gmail.com

Colossians 3:14; Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

I chose this bible verse because it means to love each other, even if you don't know them super well. While we are at Alaska we will need to figure out how to love one another and also how to get along.

https://youtu.be/Db-CF_rfZWs

Listen to Unending Love by Hillsong Worship

Let's pray. God I thank you for giving us this opportunity to go to Alaska and to hangout with friends and help the community. Amen

Heart of Service

Hope Eriks

616-312-7252 or 2025heriks@jpsstudents.org

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13:13-17

In bible times, your feet were dirty. Like really dirty. You were walking on dusty and muddy roads with thin sandals on all the time because it was the only way to get anywhere. For this reason, it was common that before a meal with other people, the lowliest servants around were tasked with the job of washing people's feet.

Now imagine you're one of the twelve disciples having dinner with your teacher (the savior of the world) and he gets down and washes your feet. This is crazy. Unheard of. To many of the disciples, this isn't even okay. But Jesus served. He put himself in a role of humility and low status because his love is selfless. It has no pride, it does not boast, and it is not a weapon to use against someone else. Jesus loved the disciples and therefore lowered himself to serve them.

We are called to be like Jesus. To love those around us and to selflessly serve. While we are in Alaska I challenge us all to be a little more like Jesus each day and to have a heart or service the whole time.

Listen to- God of Justice, by Tim Hughes ([God of Justice by Tim Hughes \(Lyric\)](#))

Write some ways that you strive to have more of a heart of service, both in your life and in Alaska...

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-
-
-
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Prayer

Dear God, I thank you for this day, and the incredible opportunity we have to go to Alaska. I am so thankful for all you have blessed me with and for all of the people you have put in my life. I pray that while I am in Alaska, I would feel you in a new way. That you would make yourself known to me, and to the members of our youth group. I pray that our youth group would adopt hearts that selflessly serve and love those around us and that we would spend the week in Alaska focused completely on you and on our relationship with you.

“Blessedness”

Shawn Sanders
(616) 427-8072

The Beatitudes are teachings and blessings that Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. The Beatitudes describe the foundation of the Christian faith. The purpose of the Beatitudes is to inspire Christians to live according to the traits Jesus describes. Some of these acts are small, and others are big, but they all form the basis of the ideal Christian lifestyle.

Matthew 5:3-10

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(people who recognise their own spiritual poverty, their need for God and that all their blessings come from God)

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

(repent and mourn for their sins, the sins of the world and the suffering of others, they recognize that mourning is a temporary earthly ailment and eternal comfort shall come from God)

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

(humble, obedient and submissive to the will of God/ those who forgo worldly power will be rewarded in the kingdom of heaven)

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

(consistently strive to better themselves and fill themselves with the word of God)

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

(show compassion and love to others)

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”

(to be full of grace, humility, and love)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”

(Spiritually calm with life/ joy in God’s favor)

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(stay strong in their faith, if treated unfairly due to their faith, they will be blessed in the next life and inherit the kingdom of heaven)

Dear God,

What a powerful teaching from your son Jesus himself. Thank you for these teachings on how we as Christians should strive to live our life day to day. As we go through our daily life and as we prepare to go on an incredible mission trip, help us to be humble and recognize the need for you, in all we do. Help us to follow and focus on you and not get distracted by the ways of the world. Help us to crave for your word each and every day. Help us to have mercy and compassion in our attitudes, words, and actions. Help us to be full of grace, humility, and love. We thank you for your words for us to live by. And we thank you for the ultimate gift of eternal life with you in the kingdom of heaven.

In Your Precious Name,

Amen

Living for God

Calum Leistra

Phone: 616-477-5912

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5–8 ESV).

Christianity is not a competitive sport but it certainly takes endurance, and God’s bar is always raised above what everyone else expects. God wants us to live up to His bar, no matter how high it may seem, because He will aid us in the process.

Living for God is not about sprinting to a destination, but speed walking with Him. May you recognize the areas of your life that God wishes to raise up to His standard.

Payer: Dear God please be with us all on this mission trip. Let us all have a good time and a great experience with you up in Alaska.

Mathew VandenBos

616-634-7217

Exodus 17:8-13

⁸The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

¹⁰So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹²When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Joshua is first seen in the Bible during this passage of scripture in Exodus. His life and story of faith, courage and leadership is a strong example for all. In the scripture we find Joshua being called by Moses, who was the current lead of the Israelites. Joshua will soon become the leader of the Israelites and see them through their journey over the Jordan River into the Promised Land. But first, Joshua must respond to his initial calling against the Amalekites. Joshua and the Israelites prevail in their battle at Rephidim. But of important note in this story are two important factors: First, Joshua would surely not have become a strong and successful leader of the Israelites if he had not responded to Moses’ call. Second, Moses, with the help of Aaron and Hur, kept his arms and staff in the air at all times during Joshua’s battle against the Amalekites.

As you serve over the next number of days, take this challenge upon yourself: what’s your purpose here? Surely, you must be here for a reason. You must be here because you were called by God for something big, right? Imagine being in Joshua’s shoes. In the process of twenty four hours, Joshua goes from being an unnamed and unknown member of the Israelites to being a leading fighter in an epic battle on the way to their freedom. Joshua, Moses, Aaron, Hur, and the Israelites were on a journey, on a mission. They were called and God had a role for each of them.

- Where do you see yourself in this story? Joshua? The Israelites? Moses, Aaron or Hur? Why?
- Why do you think God has you here this week?
- What can you be doing to courageously move from being “just an Israelite” to “responding to God’s call?”

Prayer: God, make me courageous to do big things for you this week. Amen.

One's Help
Ian Lobbes
(616)-888-5504

The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:7-8)

If interpreted literally this passage advertises that faith can protect one from harm, but we still experience harm. So what could this passage be saying otherwise is up for debate.

(Commentary from Jeremy: the word harm here is better translated as "evil." And I'd add that the Lord keeps us from it, but we keep chasing after evil as people who sin. But what God wants what is best for us and is out for our best interest as believers. He wants to protect us and be with us. And he also has things to teach us when we fall into sin.)

What is one way, if any, that you have felt God watching over you?

Dear God,

Thank you for this opportunity of this mission trip to see the wonders of the natural world and to assist others as well. Amen.