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So I mentioned last week that we're going to be praying this week. I asked you to prepare your hearts to please be ready to pray for this church, for our community, for everything God wants to do in us and through us. And I hope you had time for that, but if not, that's okay. We're going to start right now with our time of open worship. And just ask God to open up your heart to being an intercessor, because that is what he wants from all of us. He wants us joining with him in prayer and unlocking his power in this world. So in our time of open worship, please just ask God to prepare your heart to be an intercessor and to be willing to pray. [ Pause ] [ Pause ] Good morning. We were discussing the prayer time in Christian Ed Meeting Monday, and we decided that instead of all of us standing up and pray, because we all felt very strongly about it, we would offer a joint prayer from our board. We are not the youngest, Jimmy is, but we feel so strongly that we need to really come together and work hard. And so this is our prayer for our meeting. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you on the Christian Ed Board. We love and thank those people who have helped in the past as well as the present. We ask that we are enthusiastically led to share your love with the children and the adults in our meeting. We pray for Pastor Keith's safe arrival and that he may help us to grow in our Christian faith. Father, we praise your name and we give thanks for your blessing in all our lives. And in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] [ Pause ] Andrew Murray is a man who wrote quite extensively on the subject of prayer and intercession. And I am reading from him today. He's talking about in verse in Isaiah 59-16 that said, "He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed." Andrew Murray said, "God had among his people intercessors to whom he listened. In Isaiah we read of a time of trouble when he sought for an intercessor in vain. There was none who loved the people enough or who had sufficient faith to intercede. If there had been an intercessor, he would have given deliverance. Without an intercessor, his judgments came down. The place the intercessor holds in the kingdom of God is of infinite importance. God gives us such power, and yet there are so few who know what it is to take hold of his strength and pray for his blessing. When Christ had taken his place on the throne, the work of his kingdom was given into the hands of men. Prayer is the highest exercise of Christ's royal prerogative as king-priest upon the throne. All that he was to do in heaven was to be in fellowship with his people here on earth. God waits for his people's intercession. God rules the world in his church through the prayers of his people. That God should have made the extension of his kingdom to such a large extent dependent on the faithfulness of his people in prayer is a stupendous mystery and yet an absolute certainty. God calls for intercessors. In his grace, he has made his work dependent on them. Does anyone here feel led to pray right now? Let's sing him 110, Sweet Hour of Prayer. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care, and bids me act, my father's throne. Make all my wants and wishes flow. In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and often saved the tempest there. By thy return, sweet hour of prayer. One more reading from Andrew Murray here. This time he's talking about Isaiah 62, verses 6 and 7. "Take no rest, all you who pray. Give the Lord no rest until he makes Jerusalem the object of praise throughout the earth." Andrew Murray says, "What a gift of grace to be allowed to work with God in intercession for the needs of others. What a blessing to mingle my prayers with His. What an honor to have power with God in heaven for those who do not know Christ. What a privilege to bring to Him the church, individuals, ministers, or missionaries, and plead on their behalf until He entrusts me with the answer. As God's children, we are blessed to pray together until victory is gained over difficulties here on earth or over the powers of darkness. For a long time, we may have thought of prayer simply as a means of supplying our needs in life. May God help us to see the place of intercession takes in His divine counsel and in His work for the kingdom. May our hearts really feel that there is no honor or joy on earth at all equal to the unspeakable privilege of waiting upon God and interceding for the blessing He delights to give. I'm going to open up one last time just in case there's anyone here who would like to pray today. All right, Kyle. You just want to do out loud or go to the microphone? Okay, go for it. What a bother. Thank you so much for being this great people and being your chosen people. Lord, I thank you so much for the people in this room who have supported me and supported you through supporting themselves and each other. It makes me so glad and joyful to see everybody here happy and praising you. Lord, as we move into this new time in this church, we ask you to be with us and that you just continue blessing us the way you have and Lord, we just thank you so much for each one so being your will, Lord, and your perfect will might with us as well. Lord, growth is in that land and if not, then we're interested in who we love you and honor you and please you as much as we can. We also pray for Matthew as he continues his new job and we need to stay with us. We welcome him. Thank you so much. Your name. Amen. It doesn't surprise me at all that we had someone from our youth group praying because we have an amazing praying youth group and I know you guys don't get to visit very often, but every single youth group, we all share our prayer requests and everyone picks someone else's and everyone prays for someone. And we have a praying youth group and that is wonderful and it does not surprise me at all. We had a youth volunteer to stand up and pray. I don't know if you remember, but I do well several years ago when I decided I could teach the Sunday School class, which was Kyle and Alex and Brandon and they were such a neat bunch of kids and I'm not really a teacher, but somehow I felt that I should do that for a short period of time and it was just a short period of time. But while I was there, those boys spoke at that time and how old were you Kyle? Probably 13, 14, somewhere along there. They were young, but they verbalized a vision for this church and they could see it. They knew it and they also knew at that early age that they wanted to be a part of it. And for me, as just an older member of Carmel Friends, it really broke me to realize that they had that much energy and vision and I was at the stage of life where I felt like there probably wasn't a whole lot good I could contribute anymore. But the reason I share this with you is I think God has been showing us all the many years that I have been here what he wants for us and it comes in small answers. Like those young men, to me they prophesied. To me they were prophets that day. They saw, they knew and as you've watched, they've claimed it. They spoke it and they've done it. So I think that's just a small example of the many things that have gone on here at Carmel Friends that sometimes we have missed because it appeared perhaps childlike. But look how powerful that has been. So I think if we examine ourselves and are willing to be broken for God to break us, that he does have magnificent things in store for us. I agree with that completely. Like it or not, you can get to heaven without being an intercessor. You can get to heaven without constantly praying. But like it or not, God has locked up the blessings of what he wants to do in us and through us until we unlock them with prayer. That is the way that he's chosen to work. And so we must pray, we must partner with God, we must partner with Jesus who right now is sitting in heaven praying for us. We must join our prayers together with him and release everything that God wants to do through us. But who is graciously held back until we prayed. Is there anyone else who would like to stand up now and pray? Lord, you have been with us through this church for many, many years. And I thank you for all the faithful ones that have gone before us. And now I pray that you will put within our hearts a real hungering for your presence within us that we might have a compassion for those around us who do not know you. That we might have a love for these people, no matter what kind of a person they are. That we might want to reach out to these people. And we know that you will prepare the way for us, you will prepare the words for us, everything that we need to reach those around us. And so I thank you that today will be the beginning of a new season for this church. We want to praise and honor you in everything that we do. In Jesus name I pray, Amen. Anyone else? Dear Lord, I just want to ask once again for your blessing on all these people. Clearly we have a congregation who really cares about the direction that the church is going. Lord, we pray that you would just be with us and guide us as we move forward into this new time. Just help us to above all things do your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen. Amen. Let's close with, it is well with my soul, hymn number 73. We will just sing the first verse. When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows thy sea-bills roll. Whatever my love thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul. Heavenly Father, we praise you and we thank you that you have chosen to make us a part of how you get things done. We thank you God that you have decided to hold back and wait until the opportunity that we allow you to work through us. And so God now we ask that as we step forth in faith that you will supply our every need, that you will speak to our hearts, open our eyes to the opportunities that present themselves, give us the words to say, give us the strength to carry out everything that you would have us do, God. We know that we can count on you. We know you will always be there for us. And give us just, give us the strength to overcome the fear that stands in the way. And we also want to thank you now for the meal that has been prepared for us. Bless the hands that have prepared it. Bless the food to our body. And I pray that you guard our hearts and minds as we discuss our church business afterwards. In Jesus' name, amen.