

Praying Your Neighborhood

You're invited to make a five-stop journey, ending at your home. You should be able to complete the first four stops driving around not too far from your home or walking around a downtown area. At each stop, you're invited to read a scripture, reflect on that scripture in that place, and pray before heading to the next stop.

The Powerful

1. **Find** a place that represents wealth and power. Try a courthouse or municipal center, financial institution or police station.
2. **Read:** In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. (Luke 2:1-3)
3. **Reflect:** Where do these institutions fall short? What do we wish they would do? Who is unheard by the powerful?
4. **Pray:** your own or

God of stable, stars and surprises, of light and hope and new life:
open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;
forgive our obsession with property and possessions;
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.

Open us to your grace,
that we might hear again the song of the angels,
and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.

The Stranded

1. **Find** a place where people get stuck—a bus station or a park (homeless neighbors are often there) or a shelter.
2. **Read:** Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom. (Luke 2:4-7)
3. **Reflect:** Who has no place to go most nights? Who can only think about tonight? How do we see them like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus?
4. **Pray:** your own or

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open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;
forgive our obsession with property and possessions;
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.

Open us to your grace,
that we might hear again the song of the angels,
and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.

The Struggling

1. **Find** a place that never closes—a gas station or Denny's restaurants are good bets.
2. **Read:** Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped

snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.” (Luke 2:8-14)

3. **Reflect:** What do you see here that you might miss otherwise? What do you imagine this place is like late at night? What holy thing might show up here?

4. **Pray:** your own or

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The Hopeful

1. **Find** a place that inspires hope. Maybe it’s a church or a Christmas light show or a place where people go for help.

2. **Read:** When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. (Luke 2:15-19)

3. **Reflect:** What gives you hope here? Who else do you think finds hope here? What else might offer someone hope?

4. **Pray:** your own or

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and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.

The Faithful

1. **Find** your home or maybe some place else you love.

2. **Read:** The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told. (Luke 2:20)

3. **Reflect:** What have you heard and seen in this journey? Where did you give thanks? What will you remember about your neighborhood?

4. **Pray:** your own or

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open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;
forgive our obsession with property and possessions;
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.

Open us to your grace,
that we might hear again the song of the angels,
and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.