
A Community in Prayer

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Rev. Canon Cathy Zappa**

If you [click this link](#), you will see one of the holiest documents of this church: our parish prayer list. It looks much like any other list, but it is so much more! It's a living testament to our faith in prayer and our love for others. It is a kind of sacrament, a visible sign, of our trust in God and in one another—and of *all* the prayers of this community, spoken and unspoken.

Behind each name on this list is someone who dared to reach out and ask for prayer for themselves or for someone they care about. Some prayers are for short-term, focused needs, like an upcoming surgery, interview, test, or move. Others are for long-term hardships like grief or illness. Others still are for joyful but nerve-racking occasions like pregnancy, or graduation, or travel. We have prayer requests for members of this church, as well as for family, friends, neighbors, and strangers. There are prayers for everything and everyone. No concern, occasion, or feeling is off-limits before God and God's people!

Behind each name is also a community in prayer. Your clergy and pastoral care staff, along with lay groups like the Daughters of the King, pore over this list every week and pray for those on it. We *all* pray for those on our parish prayer list in our Prayers of the People every Sunday morning.

We are not alone, this prayer list reminds us, and we do not bear our burdens alone. When we are facing challenges that threaten to overwhelm us, we can pray, and we can ask others to pray with us. When we don't think we can pray ourselves, we can ask others to pray for us. When we don't know how to help someone we love, we can pray for them.

Prayer is no copout, either! It is not a passive alternative to action! On the contrary, in my experience, at least, prayer draws me out to care for others in concrete ways. Like many of you, I also have my own personal prayer list: people I want to remember before God. God remembers people before me, too! Often when I'm praying, a name will pop into my mind. If I pay attention and follow the Spirit, I'll send that person a quick text or give them a call, only to discover that God brought them into my prayer for a reason. I have been on the receiving end of this, too. More times than I can count, I have been the one buoyed up by the kind word of another, spoken when I didn't even know I needed it..

The more we practice intercessory prayer, the more we find God praying in us, nudging us to reach out to someone, to say what is on our heart, or to ask for prayer ourselves. The more we pray for one another, the more we find ourselves paying attention to those divine nudgings and to the people around us.

Yes, prayer changes us. It changes our community. It binds us together with friends and strangers alike. It leads to attention and action and connection, with God and with one another. So friends, let us pray for one another and for those in need—and let us ask others to pray for us. We are a people who pray for one another!

To add a name to the parish prayer list, contact Cathy Zappa (czappa@cathedralATL.org) or Hillary Jones (hjones@cathedralATL.org). We also maintain a private prayer list, which is seen only by pastoral-care staff. For a pastoral emergency, or to reach the clergy on call: 404-365-1003.

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*