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**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH – MLC Sunday #3**

O Lord, you have revealed your good and gracious will to your people on earth. Forgive us for pursuing knowledge that serves only our own selfish desires and for using what we have learned to exploit and hurt others. Cleanse our guilty hearts of the apathy we feel for studying your Word and searching out the deeper truths of in the Scriptures.

Heavenly Father, send the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts so that like the Bereans of old we eagerly learn of you. As the deer pants for streams of water, may we be instilled with a longing to explore the mysteries of your grace. Increase in us the knowledge of your truth. God of light, give to the Church renewed wisdom and fresh understanding that the message of your salvation may shine ever brighter in this dark age.

Lord God, King of the universe, direct the governments of the world so that we may live quiet and peaceful lives. Protect us from crime, civil unrest, and war. Continue to allow freedom of religion to flourish, that the gospel may be freely preached throughout the world. Cast down rulers who oppress their people. Remove governments who oppose the gospel. Bring relief to persecuted Christians both in our nation and around the world.

Bless our church with pastors and teachers who faithfully proclaim your Word. Today, as we give thanks for our church body’s worker training system we remember especially our College of Ministry and ask for your blessing on its *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross* strategic plan. Bless the offerings of your people so that we can meet the needs for student aid and facilities. Use each of us to encourage many young men and women to consider studying for the preaching and teaching ministries. Raise up faithful servants of Christ to labor in the gospel both at home and in distant lands. By the power of your gospel, motivate them so that they do not become discouraged but continue in the course you have set before them.

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer*.

Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth so that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow. May your peace, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

