



Dear Christ Church,

There are continued good reports on Christine today including her ability to sleep through the night. We are so thankful to God for this gift to Christine. As Psalm 4:8 ministered to our hearts on Sunday we were reminded:

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

Please continue to pray constantly for Christine's restoration. **Specifically, ask that Christine's body would be strengthened in preparation for tomorrow's facial bone reconstruction surgery and the recovery to follow.** Stay close to what Christine and the Warner family need prayed over them by visiting [the blog](#) regularly. Here you will also find regular updates on her condition.

In crisis, especially one that involves someone as kind and good as our dear Christine, we find ourselves responding in a number of ways. As we grow tired and the days grow long, we are opened up to spiritual attacks. We are tempted to believe lies of the enemy or to slip back into former habits of flesh for comfort. As St. Peter would say, "Be alert!" (1 Pet 5:8). Be alert to the emotions of your heart; be alert to the questions of your mind and offer them up to the Lord. He is not afraid of our pain, our emotions, or even our questions about his goodness.

We want to give a few resources to you, the people of Christ Church, to aid you as you attend to your heart and mind. As you attend yourself, do it in the company of the saints around you. Seek them out, be vulnerable and let the Spirit minister to you.

HEART

Emotions seem to froth forward out of our hearts. We experience feelings of anger, sadness, depression, frustration, jealousy that others might know more, or numbness that brings guilt for not feeling more. We may even feel many of these simultaneously and not know how to make sense of them.

One of the gifts of praying the Psalms is the range of emotions that we are permitted to bring to God. We hear David and other psalmists boldly cry:

- How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? (Ps 13:2)
- Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever. (Ps 44:23)
- My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, “Where is your God? (Ps 42:3)

We are permitted to bring our emotions to God. We have prayer language to do that in the Psalms. In addition, the Scriptures help lift our eyes just above our grief and show the bright edge of resurrection hope on the horizon. To feel the warmth of the morning's rays rest on our messiness, you might need some help. Journeying through this [list of prayers](#) that ground our identity and emotions in God's Word may give you the words you can't find. It may be helpful to light a candle and slowly pray through these statements of truth about who God says you are. Perhaps invite a friend or family member to do this with you.

MIND

Along with this vivid pallet of emotions, there are questions that seem to rise up from deep within that converge at this central question, “Why God? Why did this happen?” This is normal to ask, even if it comes out more like an accusation. Scripture invites us to bring even our doubts to God, “I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). As humans we look for answers, for solutions and we long to see the “why” of every event. God does not ignore our minds or our questions, however, we're not always given answers. Be assured though, he does not leave us without glances of hope; glimpses that work with, not against, our minds for understanding suffering, tragedy, and evil. Bring your questions before him and stay with him there; he will meet you.

If you are struggling particularly with these sorts of questions and want a book to flip through - maybe not even cover to cover - here are a few resources that might be helpful.

[A Grief Observed](#): CS Lewis shares the honest and painful journey of suddenly losing his wife and gives language to some of our deepest questions. He writes with honesty at how even a renowned Christian apologist can wrestle with his sense of perspective and trust in God in painful moments. Even though he doesn't tackle these questions head on, Lewis has a gift of giving language to our inner world. As an academic, he helps give us language to our questions. This is a head/heart book together.

[The Doors of the Sea](#): A short but thoughtful and academic reflection by theologian David Bentley Hart on the question, “Why did God allow the Indonesian tsunami of 2004 to happen?” Hart wrestles with thinkers like Voltaire, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche and offers the Christian worldview, the cross, and the chaos of spiritual warfare as part of his answer. This book is short, dense, powerful, and hopeful as Hart reminds us there are dark powers in the world, but these will be finally vanquished one day.

COMMUNITY

The fleshy, imperfect, yet beautiful piece that ties our minds and hearts together is the power of community. We're made in the image of our Triune God so it's not so surprising that the best way to capture runaway emotions and perplexed thinking is to engage them in the company of others.

Now is when we lean into the discipline of not standing alone—we CANNOT stand alone. This is not a slogan for Christ Church, this IS Christ Church. Walk in the light as he is in the light (1 John 1:5-7).

- Take advantage of prayer ministry; loving people are waiting to intercede for you.
- Have coffee with a friend, share your feelings and pray together.
- Make an appointment with a pastor, leader, counselor or spiritual director to humbly allow mature, wise and gentle leaders guide us to truth and hope.

If you need help connecting to these resources, please reach out to Jodi (jodi@christchurchofaustin.org) or Matt (matt@Christchurchofaustin.org) and they will help connect you to a trusted person.

We continue to request that no direct communications be sent to Cliff and Christine, but rather the care@christchurchofaustin.org email address. **And please, in consideration for the Warners, no hospital visitations.** Please direct general questions to meghan@christchurchofaustin.org. For pastoral concerns, please reach out to matt@christchurchofaustin.org.

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Under His Mercy,

The Christ Church Staff and Vestry

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