

Health, growth, completion

# Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

[www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org)

Summer/Autumn 2022

Dear brothers and sisters,

As in years past, in October we began our Season of Thanksgiving. This special harvest time reminds us to reflect on the wonders of our eternal Father. He has remained faithful to His promise to Noah, and to all humanity, in Genesis 8:22:

*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest,  
Cold and heat, winter and summer,  
And day and night shall not cease.*

It is interesting to note that God spoke these words after Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings, which were a soothing aroma to the Lord. The decree, "seedtime and harvest," alone accounts for manifold abundances in all the aspects of our life. We see this in the natural creation, in the plants and animals, as well as in the natural order of behaviors, which are manifested in the seeds of words or actions. When a seed is planted, be it good or evil, it will bring forth a harvest, sometimes to our joy and other times to our sadness or dismay. At times of joy, we run to our benevolent Father with our gratitude and offerings of thanks. And, when the harvest is a product of our sinfulness, we fall before Christ, our Redeemer, and ask for forgiveness, protection, and resolution.

Let us also consider the planting of our forebearers, who, in faith and inspired by the Holy Spirit, planted many seeds and made many investments with their sacrifices. These, too, have come to harvest in a multitude of ways permitted by God, perhaps sometimes unnoticed at first glance. Thus, a season of thankfulness allows us time to consider and reconsider what the Almighty has done, is doing, and will do through those He has called into His service.

When we look back on this year, we can also see the richness of God's workings in the visits of our Chief Apostle, the National Deacon Conference, and the first New Minister Conference, as well as the opening of ordained ministry to women.

In many Christian circles, October is also considered a time for appreciation of ministers. Perhaps it seems a little awkward, yet I feel it is my responsibility to remind you of the love and caring of the many servants throughout our district. Out of their love for Christ and His people, they give much of their time and effort to serve in our congregations. It is right for us to thank our heavenly Father for calling and inspiring these helpers, to be mindful of them, and perhaps, even express our gratitude with a supporting word or encouragement.

May the aroma of our thankful hearts be even more appealing than the offerings of Noah – the Lord has given us much!

With my sincere and deep gratitude for all of you,



# BECOMING A MINISTER

*Have you heard the Lord's call to serve in new or different ways?*



It is with this question that the new process of becoming a minister begins. This year, the first group of new ministers journeyed through this process culminating in our first ever, *New Minister Conference*, and ultimately, their ordination.



So what does the process look like?  
**Let's start at the beginning.**

## STEP 1:

## IDENTIFICATION AND INTRODUCTORY CONVERSATION

As our rector deliberates over the strategic plan and future of our congregation, in conversation with the Apostle, he may see that a few more ministers are needed now, or will be needed in the near future. In this same conversation, possible candidates are identified which the rector will reach out to with a few basic questions.

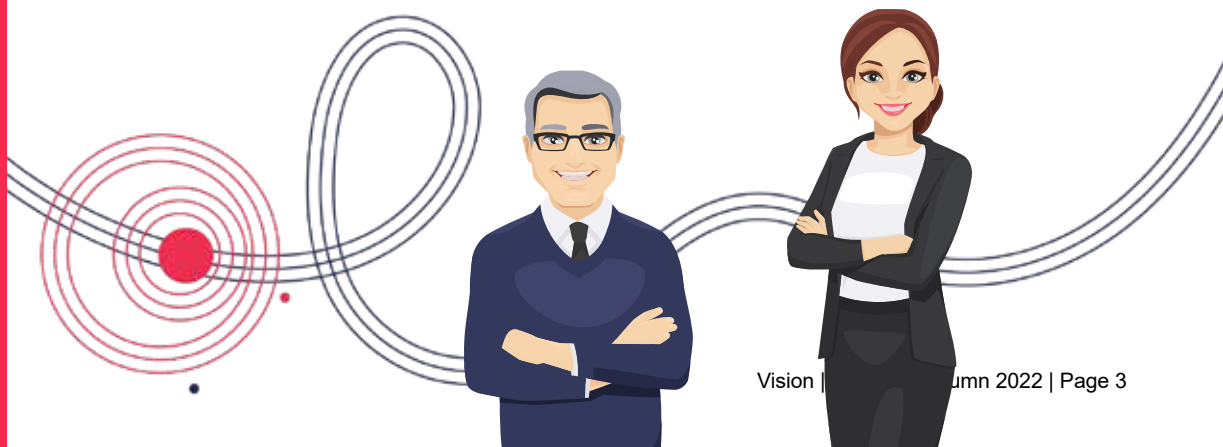
This conversation is based on how you may like to serve the Lord in the future. Have you given this some thought? Do you feel called to serve Him in a new way? Have you discovered your spiritual gifts? Often, this discovery leads to inspiring new ideas about how you can better serve the body of Christ and your community. If you haven't yet gone through the Spiritual Gift small group curriculum, this would be the first step for you, perhaps accompanied by the rector, or other ministers or members. Knowing your god-given gifts and passions brings you to...

## STEP 2:

## THE ORDINATION DISCUSSION AND MCR

What's an MCR? We'll get to that in a moment. First, your rector will ask to meet with you and your spouse (if married), for a more in-depth conversation. He'll explain the plan and vision for the congregation, and how you could fit into that plan as a minister, specifically laying out expectations and how you could more effectively use your gifts and passions in the congregation. You would come to know that your rector, district rector, and apostle see in you a potential to serve in ministry and hope that you may also feel an inner desire to serve God in a new way. You and your spouse would be given time to consider your calling to ministry; to pray for God's guidance and strength in this decision and to ask questions, all the time being supported by your rector and knowing he is praying for the same things. He'll also walk through all the steps and what you can expect over the next few months on the path to becoming a minister.

When you feel ready, and agree to take the next step, an MCR, or *Minister Change Request* is submitted. It is a proposal, initiated by your rector, which is sent to your district rector and apostle for their review, and finally to the District Apostle for his approval. The ministries of deacon and priest are rooted in the apostle ministry. It is imperative, that as a new minister, you are embraced and supported by the ministers that you will be working with. The submission of this form also triggers Step 3.



## STEP 3:

## LEARNING & PREPARATION

Once the MCR is approved, you'll receive a work book and a list of courses that are necessary to complete on-line. In addition to the many gifts, talents, and skills that God has given you, the Church is also ready to equip you with the knowledge that you will need to carry out the mission that you will be given the authority to do; mainly preaching the gospel, dispensing the trinitarian blessing, and providing pastoral care. Additionally, for priests, this includes dispensing the sacraments and blessings.



	DEACON	PRIEST
PASTORAL CARE	Introduction to Grief and Grief Support Pastoral Care at the End of Life	Grief and Grief Support Grief Support Strategies Unique and Complicated Grief
CULTURE	What is the gospel? Understanding Liturgy Vision and Mission Articles of Faith - the New Apostolic Creed Catechism of the New Apostolic Church L.O.V.E. Small Group Participant Training	The Apostolate Service for the Departed The Basics
DIVINE SERVICE EXPERIENCE	Engaging the Holy Spirit Effective Preaching Liturgy of a divine service Praying more Effectively	Praying more Effectively 2

You would have approximately three months to complete the course work and also have a few follow-up discussions with your rector or apostle to answer any questions.

As a minister, members may come to you with serious and private matters. In the interest of putting first the protection and confidentiality of our members, you'll receive documents to sign regarding ministerial requirements, confidentiality, and sexual misconduct called *Principles of Understanding*. Additionally, for the safety of our members, the Church requires your consent for a sexual misconduct background check. This brings us to Step 4.



## STEP 4: THE NATIONAL NEW MINISTER CONFERENCE

Each year all prospective ministers, that have progressed through the steps we've outlined so far, are invited to the *New Minister Conference*, and this time you would be invited!

The goal of the conference is to provide training and give ample time to answer any questions you may have before your ordination. It's also a great time to meet and get to know other members from across the country who are also preparing for ministry.

To give you a glimpse of what you'll experience, this past June, 25 newly ordained and to-be ordained ministers gathered in Cleveland, Ohio with all the USA apostles for workshops and discussions. The District Apostle opened the event on Friday evening by speaking about the beautiful mosaic that is created when different and unique individuals come together to serve the body of Christ. Using various examples from Scripture, he expounded on what it means to be called by God, how we can respond to that calling, and the various characteristics of a minister. He concluded by giving a preview of the three elements given in an ordination: authority, sanctification, and blessing.

*Like a mosaic, all are different and unique, and that is exactly the wonder of our Creator, who brings diverse, dissimilar people together to create a body, His body, His church, that reflects His beauty and image.*



*It is a grace of God to be called to serve, it is a privilege.*



## THE NATIONAL NEW MINISTER CONFERENCE

Saturday morning the District Apostle described how everything that we do in the Church (and everything learned about at the conference) fits into Stepping Forward, and consequently the health and growth of our congregations. The conference continued with presentations by the apostles and facilitators on liturgy, prayer, music and message, effective preaching, and *diakonia*; a workshop on sermon preparation and outlines; small group discussions on *The Basics (You're home)* materials) and various points from the course work, as well as a review of the sacraments. Extra time was made for questions, discussion, and relationship building and many resources and materials were made available to take home. As it was for those 25 ministers, the conference prepares you for your ministry.



*You can do it! Our omnipotent God and Father has shaped and prepared you to be part of something greater, just as He did with Moses and all those He has called through the ages.*



## STEP 5:

## ORDINATION

The final step of this process is ordination, yet, that's not the end! *Being a minister is a journey of continual learning and growing.* You will receive thoughts and support from your apostle. Twice a month, you'll receive an email from the District Apostle along with updates about events, new resources and initiatives, or important information for your ministry or congregation. You can utilize the wealth of resources available on the Church's Minister Companion and NDI websites.

Most importantly, being minister means continually deepening your knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ; through time spent in prayer, studying the Bible, and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. - **KAH**

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*Ministers form an integral part of the church and we are thankful to those that have embraced the calling. Let us always give them our prayerful support.*







On Friday, the Chief Apostle, as well as all the apostles of both Americas, gladly met one another together in Mexico City, the capital and largest city of Mexico. On Saturday morning, the conference of apostles began in full swing. Chief Apostle Schneider shared some teachings and thoughts, and after a brief break, the apostles enjoyed a question and answer period.

The zenith of this event was the divine service on Sunday, August 7 with the conference attendees and

members of Mexico. This was the first time that Chief Apostle Schneider visited Mexico. In this service, Apostle John Schnabel was assigned as a District Apostle Helper for the USA district in preparation for his succession as district apostle. With joy-filled hearts from the weekend and divine service, the visit came to a close as the group left Mexico City on Monday. The fellowship and unity felt during this trip was worth the two years of patience and planning. - LRK

# LINKED DISTRICT VISITS

*As the threat of COVID 19 has been mitigated by vaccines and testing, Apostles were once again able to visit countries under their care, where they haven't been able to go for the last 2 years.*

## COLOMBIA

*Apostle Fendt*

The weekend of September 24-25 was one of historic significance for the Church in both Colombia and Venezuela. I was overjoyed to be able to visit Bogota, Colombia with the District Apostle and to partake and witness the various activities which took place, including the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the church in Colombia, a meeting with ministers from both Colombia and Venezuela, and a divine service with a retirement, assignment, and appointment.

The 50th anniversary was celebrated through photos accompanied by narration, describing the church's development in various areas of the country during the last half-century. It was striking to hear about the persistence of the early pioneers who came to Colombia with little more than a calling to share the Church's teaching. No one awaited them when they visited a new city. The work mostly involved what sales people describe as 'cold-calling,' which simply means that they started talking to whoever would listen. Their determination continues to echo in the Church today.

The ministers' meeting included eleven lead ministers from Colombia, six from Venezuela, and one each from Peru, Panama, and Ecuador. Thereby all the LID areas could be included and represented in the meeting, which had a significant focus on the topic of women in ministry. This gathering was of exceptional meaning for the ministers from Venezuela, since it has not been possible for anyone from the USA to visit them for almost 8 years. It was very moving for the District Apostle and I to have fellowship with these brothers after so long.

The divine service also included acts of great significance. Bishop Eduardo Rodriguez, who served as the lead minister in Colombia for 13 years, was retired from his ministry. For the future care of the work in Colombia, Bishop Jhon Martinez was assigned and Priest Julio Romani was appointed as District Rector for the Bogota district. In order to provide a better structure for the Work in Venezuela, Yilmar Molina was assigned as a Bishop. We are thankful for what the Lord has done over these many years, and thankful that He has provided for the future of the Church as well.



# JAMAICA

*Apostle Ferguson*

After spending years biking around Jamaica to care for the members there, Pr. Williamson - the rector of Hampshire - was able to buy a new motorbike. In addition to a contribution from the Church, a few of the local ministers contributed enough to make up the difference and even pay for his insurance for the next year. The District Elder Stephenson, the local ministers, and of course Pr. Williamson, are very grateful that this was made possible!



# GUYANA

*Apostle Ferguson*



**Seafield** - 54 gathered for service and 10 souls were sealed. Priest Terrence Griffith was retired; he has traveled to Seafield from Georgetown the past three years to serve the members there. Pr. Griffith has been an active priest for over 46 years; 16 in Guyana and about 30 years in the U.S. (in New York and Atlanta).

**Georgetown** - 48 gathered for service and Pr. Hilton Smith (already in his 70's) was retired, who came in from Wakapoa, where he cared for both Wakapoa and Akawini congregations for over 40 years. Pr. Joel Smith (his son) now cares for these congregations.

**Victoria** - 61 gathered for service, five souls were sealed, and Pr. Donald Rutherford was retired. He has been active as a priest for 45+ years, serving in all the congregations in Guyana. Victoria is the original congregation in Guyana, and there is wonderful life here! Of particular interest is how the members have repaired and painted the church themselves, including adding a fabulous overhang for fellowships outside.



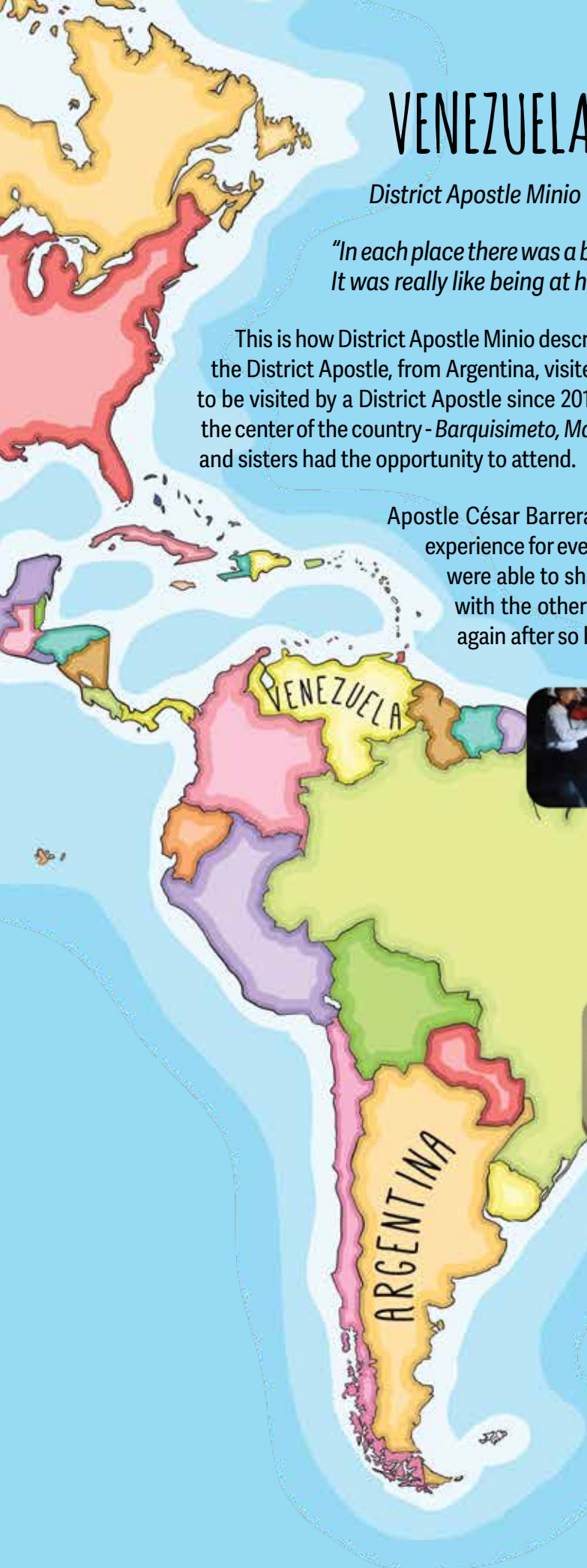
# VENEZUELA

District Apostle Minio

*"In each place there was a beautiful welcome, full of love and hospitality. It was really like being at home."*

This is how District Apostle Minio described his visit to Venezuela. Between June 23 and 26 of this year, the District Apostle, from Argentina, visited the brothers and sisters in Venezuela, who had not been able to be visited by a District Apostle since 2018. He visited and held divine services in four different cities in the center of the country - *Barquisimeto, Maracay, Valencia, and Caracas* - which more than 2,000 brothers and sisters had the opportunity to attend.

Apostle César Barrera, in charge of the region, also expressed that it was a great experience for everyone in Venezuela. This visit left deep joy in the attendees who were able to share these wonderful moments with District Apostle Minio and with the other brothers and sisters, with whom they had the joy of meeting again after so long.





# PRAYER

Chief Apostle Schneider • El Salvador • August 4

*Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. - Psalm 62:8*

The Bible verse today is about prayer. Some might ask, “Why do we have to pray? God knows everything. Why would I need to tell God everything?” God does not need our prayers, but we, on the other hand, need to pray. We need to pray to God because that’s *the basic need of our soul*. God created each human with a soul, which needs and desires to talk to its Creator. Our prayers are an excellent indicator of our spiritual health, allowing us to examine the intensity of our faith, love, and hope, which find expression in our prayers.

God is interested in everything: our joys, our sorrows, anxieties, annoyances, questions, and doubts. God is almighty and all-knowing – no one is better able to help us. We can tell Him anything, without fear of being judged or rejected because His love for me doesn’t depend on my behavior, on my deeds, on my strengths or weaknesses. We can be confident that when we approach God in prayer, He listens to us with interest and care, so pour out your heart!

Sometimes we talk a lot about things that irritate us to those around us, but we never talk to God about them. We would do well to ask ourselves why... Perhaps we do not want to do what God wants to tell us. When we hesitate to talk to God about something, that should be a red flag for us to turn inward and look at our motivations.

When we talk to people, we can hide what is not to our advantage. But we cannot hide anything from God. Not to mention our shortcomings in our prayers is to lie to ourselves! Let us recognize our weaknesses and repentantly ask God to help us overcome them.

When we understand prayer not only as a privilege, but a necessity for our souls to speak and spend time with its Creator, we also begin to see that prayer takes preparation. Let us take time to worship, to become aware of God’s omnipotence and omniscience.

*It is impossible to know a healthy Christian life without also knowing a vibrant prayer life. Praying is the oxygen for the soul, the way through which we commune with God and via God’s Word, God communes with us.*

Jason Allen  
**Spurgeon’s Library: Prayer**

Let us remember all that God has already done for us and thank Him. Let us learn to pray in Jesus' name, asking God for what Jesus asks for us. Such preparation allows us to clearly establish our priorities. If we delight in the Lord, He will give us what our hearts desire (Psalm 37:4).

Prayer brings us peace. When we bring our concerns to God and trust in Him, we can have peace even if the problem is not yet solved because we know He will provide. Prayer also brings renewal. This is possible when we humbly confess to God what is not right within us. We can do this every week; confessing our sins and omissions to God. In such an exposed state, we will find that God is gracious, merciful; *a refuge for us*. He forgives, and offers us the opportunity to change and begin anew.

*My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him (Psalm 62:5).*

## POURING OUT YOUR HEART... AND YOUR JUNK DRAWER

Perhaps your house has a junk drawer; a place where all manner of things gets tossed together with the expectation of future use or necessity. We could understand our hearts in a similar way: there are relationships, desires, feelings that are right at the forefront (possibly like scissors or rubber bands that we know are in the drawer, and can always find). But to really know what lives in the dark corners we have to dump the whole drawer out on the table every once in a while, and sort through its contents; discarding what doesn't belong or what we no longer need, and organizing those items which are necessary and expedient.

Pouring out our heart to God bears certain similarities. Like sorting through the drawer, it takes time and effort. Even though God is all-knowing, exposing all the things we've kept pushed to the back of our mind and heart also brings a certain vulnerability into our relationship with Him. Perhaps we have a grudge, bitterness, anger, hurt, or pain pushed into the recesses of our heart. When we lay everything before our compassionate Creator, He then lovingly helps us to sort it all out; that which is important, that which we have to work on, the situations that He will care for, and also those things that we need to let go of.

## PREPARING TO PRAY

The prayer of the people in Nehemiah 9 gives us pause to think about how we prepare to pray. Here the people fast, read Scripture, worship, and confess their sin. Extensive thought must have also been given to what they would pray for, as the first 27 verses of their prayer retell what God has done for the Israelites in detail.

*How do we prepare to pray?*

*How do we focus our mind and heart on the One we are praying to?*

The lengthy preparations recorded in Nehemiah may not always be possible to replicate, but even a few moments of silence, reading of Scripture, or even singing a hymn would facilitate a heart prepared for prayer. Taking a few moments to *pause* from the commotion of our lives, whether it's before a meal, at the beginning or end of the day, or any time we speak with God, focuses our attention on the One we are communicating with and gives us a moment to think about what we're going to say.

*Be still and know that I am God...*

Psalm 46:10



We can see how pouring our hearts out to God can change one's perspective clearly in the Psalms, for example Psalm 13:

*How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me?  
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,  
Having sorrow in my heart daily?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?  
Consider and hear me, O Lord my God;  
Enlighten my eyes,  
Lest I sleep the sleep of death;  
Lest my enemy say,  
"I have prevailed against him";  
Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.  
But I have trusted in Your mercy;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord,  
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.*

In just a few verses, the psalmist, who was clearly in despair at the beginning of their prayer, places trust in God and even rejoices and sings at what God has done for them. The writer of Psalm 139 clearly understands the importance of laying their soul bare before God, ending the chapter with – *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!*

As we come closer to the end of the year, perhaps this would be an appropriate exercise in our endeavor to grow ever closer to our heavenly Father. - **LRK/KAH**

For more thoughts and inspiration on prayer, consider ordering ***Reflections on Prayer***



*I pray because I can't help myself.  
I pray because I'm helpless. I pray  
because the need flows out of me  
at all times – waking and sleeping. It  
doesn't change God – it changes me.*

C.S. Lewis



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NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH  
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## SEASON OF THANKSGIVING

Many of the holidays we celebrate in our church are preceded by a season that builds our anticipation of the celebration. For Christmas, we have Advent. For Easter, we have Lent and Holy Week. For Pentecost, we have Eastertide. Let us also create a season of Thanksgiving to carry us towards this holiday. During this season, we have the opportunity to be intentionally aware of what God has given us, to increase our joy in Him, and to strengthen our trust in Him.

If you are looking for ways to enhance this season of thanksgiving, scan this QR code to see the resources available, which include:

- *Family activity and worship guide*
- *Gratitude challenge*
- *Downloadable Thanksgiving meal placemats*
- *At-home Thanksgiving worship experience - "Songs of Gratitude"*



These resources are also available in the NAC USA mobile app.