

Scripture Union Northern Ireland

WEEK OF PRAYER

6 – 10 January 2025

PSALM 33

1 Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. **2** Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. **3** Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy. **4** For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. **5** The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. **7** He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. **8** Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. **9** For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. **10** The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. **11** But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. **12** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance. **13** From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; **14** from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth — **15** he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. **16** No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. **17** A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.

18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, **19** to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. **20** We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. **21** In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. **22** May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

INTRODUCTION

Scripture Union is a busy place. We shift from one ministry opportunity to another, from one school to the next, from one meeting to more meetings, from one administrative task to a different administrative task...

We do all this because we have a desire to reach children and young people with God's Good News and at the very heart of this is our love of God with a desire to honour Him in all we do and say.

One of the values we have at SUNI is Prayer, therefore we want to prioritise time throughout this week to pray.

Using Psalm 33 as a basis for our prayers, there are three specific things that we can take hold of during the next five days:

We are called to **Praise God** (verses 1-5)

We are reminded of **God's Plans and Purposes** (verses 6-17)

We can trust in **God's Protection** (verses 18-22)

Each day will have a particular focus for our prayers. We have 5 days, 5 areas of focus and 5 items each day to guide and fuel our prayers.

Day 1 Focus – Children & Young People

Day 2 Focus – Operations & Administration

Day 3 Focus – Ministry Development

Day 4 Focus – Schools

Day 5 Focus – Camps & Missions

On Sunday 12 January we want to encourage as many churches as possible to pray for the ministry of SUNI. They will be provided with a PPT Slide and Prayer. Please consider asking your own church to participate.

Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for you prayers.



Damian Wharton
General Director

DAY 1 – CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Give thanks for the curiosity children and young people have towards faith. Ask God to put people in their everyday school life through workshops, lessons or SU Groups that would create space for them to ask and wrestle with their questions and point them towards Jesus and the life he has to offer.

Pray for those children and young people who may be the only Christian in their family, friend group or class that God would give them the desire and courage to be salt and light where he has placed them.

Give thanks for the faithfulness of those who volunteer and lead in children's and youth ministry through their local church. Ask that God would encourage and give them fresh vision for the role they play in the lives of those they serve.

As we see a decline in mental well-being amongst children and young people more pray for God's peace to come in their lives and for the renewing of their minds.

Pray for our growing leaders through new and current initiatives such as Base Camp, Youth Team and Making your Mark. Pray for staff and young people as they journey together and for wisdom as these initiatives grow over time.



DAY 2 – OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

Give thanks for SUNI's robust policies that guide day-to-day working. Ask God to help staff and volunteers as they seek to maintain the integrity of the organisation and reflect His character to others.

Remember the team involved in procuring a new data base for supporters, churches, and schools. Pray for wisdom in decision making, a smooth migration and successful implementation.

Give thanks for the opportunities that technology provides within SU's ministry. Ask God to help us use it for His glory and for His continued protection to keep our systems safe and secure.

Give thanks for all who support the ministry of SU whether that be practically, prayerfully, or financially. May we honour our supporters in how we operate and communicate with them.

Pray for the vast level of administration required to faithfully vet 1,000 volunteers seeking to serve with SU this Summer.



DAY 3 – MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Pray for the Ministry Development team staff, as they work alongside and support staff, volunteers, churches & other relevant partners:

For Rachel Tweedie (Chaplaincy Support Coordinator) as she settles back into work after her maternity leave and for Rachel Sheppard (Children's Ministry Coordinator) as she takes a time of sabbatical - pray that they both might return refreshed and inspired in their roles!

For Sarah and Anita, as they continue to coordinate and develop youth & special needs ministry across the organisation and for Leanne as she leads the team.

Pray for wisdom as we continue to explore & develop what holistic mission in schools looks like. Give thanks for the many churches who are seeking to serve their local schools in pastoral, practical and spiritual ways, right across N. Ireland and pray for the impact of further research into this, through Stranmillis University College. Pray for the Schools' Ministry Roadshows, due to take place on 6th, 11th and 15th March in Coleraine, Ballygawley & Lisburn. Pray that these events would further cast the vision for schools' ministry & support those who work in schools.

Give thanks for the many training & development opportunities we've had since the beginning of the current academic year eg. with local Primary teachers in Ballymena offering support with RE, with local churches offering support with Collective Worship, children's, youth or special needs ministry & with trainee teachers in Stranmillis University College. Pray for the ripple effects of such opportunities to be far reaching and for upcoming opportunities to support Team Leaders & volunteers in the run up to the summer to be inspiring!



Pray for the ongoing impact of the resources that we produce - particularly for schools, churches and mission opportunities. Pray for the ongoing use and development of key resources, such as 'Shine' and 'Shine Kids' and other resources for SU Groups, the 'Kids Quest' Primary RE curriculum overview & the teaching theme document for summer 2025 camps & missions - 'Fearless Faith'.

DAY 4 – SCHOOLS

S

SU Groups: pray for Christian groups who meet in schools - pray that pupils will be salt and light amongst their peers and will seek to be Bible people, praying people, builders of community, disciplined people and mission-minded.



C

Church volunteers: Pray for the teams of volunteers who accompany us, as well as those who faithfully engage with schools all over the country through assemblies, RE lessons and in SU Groups.

H

Holistic: Pray for this 'new' approach to Schools Ministry, as we encourage others to support schools in pastoral, practical and spiritual ways. Pray that church members would appreciate that schools ministry is an 'every member' ministry.

O

Open doors: give thanks for the welcome we (and other Christian visitors) receive in schools and pray that this will continue!

O

Open hearts: pray for the hearers of what we share - pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God to open the eyes and hearts of the audience to the truths found in Scripture.

L

Localised Staff: Pray for SUNI schools staff who engage with pupils and staff members in Primary, Post Primary and Special schools in districts all over the country, as well as those working at a national level. Pray that we will be Bible-centred, God-honouring and that we will be filled with compassion and love for those we engage with.

DAY 5 – CAMPS & MISSIONS

This new year will see us connect with thousands of people through our summer ministries. Pray for our volunteers, as God stirs in their hearts a burden for serving this summer that they would sign up and give it their all, keeping God at the centre of their motivation.

Campers booking opens soon, pray for each camper as they secure their place, that each of them would be excited for the summer ahead and that God would transform them through their experience, learning more about Him and who they have been made to be.

Pray for our missions, as they reach out to children, young people & families and bless communities all over Northern Ireland this Summer. Pray that God would use them as a shining light, that they would be people of joy and hope to those they connect with.

As we seek to develop and equip our volunteers, ask God to use our opportunities to His glory. That Base Camp would be a time of real inspiration and investment. That the Big Gather would mobilise people and encourage them in their ministry both with SU and beyond.

Pray for us all as staff, as we manage volunteer processing, run events for volunteers and supporters and get involved in all things C&Ms, that we'll be led by God to do His will for whatever he has in store.



A PRAYER FOR SCRIPTURE UNION NORTHERN IRELAND

Lord God

We thank you for the ongoing ministry of Scripture Union Northern Ireland. We thank you that over the years, Scripture Union has opened the Bible with so many children and young people, either in schools, at a camp or at one of the many summer missions and CSSM's. We thank you that your Good News is being made known.

Lord, we lift to you the work that takes place in hundreds of schools across Northern Ireland. We thank you for all the assemblies and RE lessons being delivered in primary, post primary and special schools. Lord, we pray that as the team of Scripture Union volunteers and staff stand in front of assembly halls and interact with pupils in the classroom, the words that are spoken and the lessons that are taught would have a lasting impact in the lives of those listening.

As we think of the SU Groups taking place in many of our schools, we thank you for the teachers and senior pupils who lead these groups each week. May they know your guidance and leadership. We ask that you strengthen and encourage each group so that they may be shining beacons of hope in their school communities.

We thank you that each summer Scripture Union engages with thousands of children, young people and their families as a full programme of camps and missions takes place on beaches, in castles, church halls, community centres, forest parks and housing estates. Lord, we thank you for the team leaders who plan and prepare throughout the year and for the volunteers who join SU each summer. Lord, we ask that you inspire the teams as they begin to prepare for this summer. We pray for stamina, for creativity, and that they will be filled with your hope.

We thank you that amongst the messy games, high energy activities, chill out times, arts & crafts, and so much more, the Bible will be opened, and Your Good News will be made known.

We thank you for the many people who are involved in serving and supporting the work of Scripture Union. We are truly grateful for each person who chooses to give of their time or donate their finances. As the vision continues to grow to see children and young people transformed by your Good News, Lord, please provide for all of Scripture Union's needs.

We acknowledge your Lordship over Scripture Union Northern Ireland; may they continue to keep their focus on you and may all they say and do bring you the glory you so deserve.

Amen