
NORTH SHORE PRAYER GUIDE

30 days of prayer for our friends,
neighbors, and towns



NORTH SHORE
Community Baptist Church

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a prayer guide focused entirely on the North Shore. This prayer guide was written by local people and born from the desire to meet God where he is working, right here in our communities.

You will find some entries are devoted to specific cities and towns that make up the North Shore. These aim to capture, in broad strokes, the character of a community and highlight some ways you can pray for it. Other entries are devoted to a theme or regional concern. If the information is surprising or of particular interest, you are encouraged to learn more and continue praying beyond the bounds of this guide.

Perhaps it is important to pause a minute and acknowledge a few limitations to this guide. First, every resident will have a unique take on their community. This guide could not possibly capture the nuances of living in a particular community, nor every perspective on the issues it highlights. It isn't exhaustive. What it should do is usher you into a spirit of continual prayer for the neighborhoods we call home. Recognizing that some of our neighbors face weighty challenges, parents of young children may wish to preview before reading and praying as a family.

Why a prayer guide like this? It's natural to assume one's experience is normative—that the view from our own kitchen window must be the average experience of all of our neighbors. This guide aims to bring together a diversity of perspectives and unite our hearts in prayer. To better know our community is to pray for it and to join with those who are seeking its welfare. In Scripture, prayer is not treated as an afterthought. It was an integral part of Jesus' own ministry and mission, modeled for his disciples and for us. Moreover, history shows us that prayer precedes major spiritual awakenings. Spiritual renewal does not exist outside of prayer.

Thank you for making time in your life and in your family's life to pray with intentionality for the North Shore.

Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare. Jeremiah 29:7

*Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.
Romans 12:12*

DAY 1 • PRAISE

When thinking about the North Shore—the place we call home—a likely first response is gratitude.

Among all the places we might live, the North Shore has on display an abundance of natural beauty. Lynch Park on a summer evening as the sun sets; an afternoon at Crane Beach; a float down the Essex River, a hike through the trails behind Appleton Farm in autumn. This list hardly scratches the surface.

The natural wonder of our region is matched by historic and cultural interest. Proximity to Boston gives many North Shore residents access to education, the arts, and world-class medical care. The North Shore is a place where people choose not only to vacation but to settle, to raise a family, or to retire. Those who live here are indeed blessed.

While we will be praying each day for a community or area of concern, today we simply rejoice and give thanks.

- Thank God for the opportunity to live in a community with many natural resources
- Praise God for the physical, historic, and cultural beauty of the region
- Pray that God would be made known through creation, which reveals his strength, provision, creativity, and common grace (Ps 19:1-4; Ps 104:24-28)
- Pray for a spirit of responsibility for the natural world to pervade those who live and do business here so that God would be glorified in the continued care of His creation.

As we move forward, consider these tips for using the prayer guide:

- *Remember the acronym ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. It's a great way to be intentional and focused in prayer.*
- *Make notes along the way, highlight the information and prayer requests that most challenge you. Come back to them every few days.*
- *When praying for a town you don't live in, write the names of some family, friends, or coworkers that live in that town. Pray for them by name.*

DAY 2 • BEVERLY

In 1635, a 1000-acre grant along the Bass River was divided amongst William Trask, John Woodberry, Roger Conant, John Balch, and Peter Palfrey. The land was then a part of Salem, but due to differences between Conant and Salem's governor, John Endicott, the territory would later be officially set apart and incorporated as "Beverley" in 1668.

Today, Beverly is a vibrant city with a population of just over 40,000. In its 22.6 square miles, Beverly boasts a growing arts district downtown, five commuter rail stations giving access to Boston, and numerous beautiful venues including beaches, parks, and gardens. With its accessibility to public transportation, the city has a large number of residents commuting into Boston for work. But with Endicott College, Montserrat College of Art, and many other private schools, it's not surprising that 32% of city residents work in the education sector. Sadly, in this relatively wealthy setting, Beverly still sees 9.3% of its households living in poverty. Beverly is also seeing a steep increase in opioid addictions and overdoses. Just earlier this year there were five overdoses within five days.

Did you know?

- The famous town of Beverly Hills, CA was actually named after Beverly Farms.
- Joanna Prince and Hannah Hill established one of the country's first Sunday Schools in Beverly in 1810, at the corner of Front and Davis streets.
- Some notable people have lived in Beverly including John Hale, Lucy Larcom, John Updike, Alfred Marshall, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for the efforts of organizations which seek to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness and hunger. Pray for the wellbeing of individuals who are living through such challenges.
- Ask the Lord to provide greater partnership and unity among the 22+ Christian churches located in and seeking to serve Beverly and its neighboring communities.
- Pray for NSCBC to be a good neighbor.
- Pray for the city government to exercise wise judgments in matters that impact residents.

DAY 3 • LOCAL CHURCHES

New England has known at least two major spiritual awakenings, beginning with the First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 40s, followed by the Second Great Awakening of the early 19th century. These movements impacted whole communities as people experienced revival which led to confession of sin, fervor for the Gospel, and cultural engagement.

While the North Shore doesn't lack for church buildings or congregations, Gospel-centered churches are scarcer. Around 46% of the population of Essex county considers itself Catholic with only 2.8% identifying as Evangelical Protestant. Nevertheless, there are historic churches which are united under the Gospel of Jesus Christ, seeking to live out transformed lives for the glory of God and the benefit of the world. There are also several new Gospel-centered churches which have been planted in the past 5-10 years. They often meet in non-traditional venues such as schools or concert halls. Churches may look different on the outside, they may utilize different liturgy, and they may hold some distinctive doctrines. But those that seek to live under the Gospel of Christ will find a common purpose and a shared hope for spiritual renewal in our time.

Ways to pray:

- Do you know of Gospel-centered churches in your town?
 - Pray for the church's continued commitment to the Gospel.
 - Pray for wisdom and courage as its members live out the Gospel.
 - Pray that God would give them special opportunities to impact their town for Christ.
 - Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring revival in their midst.
- Is there a church in your town that seems to have lost its bearings and strayed from Christ?
 - Pray for the Holy Spirit to open their hearts and minds to the wonders of Christ.
 - Pray for revival in their midst that would lead to true conversion.
 - Pray for the Gospel-centered congregants worshipping there to find favor and influence.
- Pray that God's word would be boldly proclaimed each week throughout the North Shore.

DAY 4 • DANVERS

The area we call Danvers was once mostly controlled by the Naumkeag branch of the Massachusetts tribe. The area was permanently settled by English colonists in 1636 and called Salem Village. In 1692 the infamous witch trials took place in Salem Village. Tourists now primarily flock to the city of Salem to commemorate the witch trials rather than to Danvers, and on the whole, Danvers residents are quite happy with this arrangement.

Today, Danvers has a population of approximately 26,500 with a wide spread of ages. It is attractive to young families and retirees alike. While some residents may experience a long commute into Boston, most of Danvers is employed more locally. Education and trade are the two largest employment sectors for Danvers residents. Danvers is often associated with commercial development rather than a residential community by those outside the town. Nevertheless, it boasts a family friendly atmosphere and strong neighborhoods that promote community spirit.

As with many towns, though there is pride in the community there is also a sense of isolation. Residents may feel connected by virtue of community spirit but often fail to engage more deeply with their neighbors. In addition, the town has been deeply touched by tragedies over the past decade. A chemical explosion in 2006 destroyed approximately 90 homes. Families are still impacted by this today. In 2013, a young math teacher was murdered at Danvers High School. The shock and grief are still profound.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for those who feel isolated and friendless.
- Pray for those who are homeless and currently living in motels on Route 1. Pray also for local government as they assess how to handle the situation.
- Pray for local businesses to thrive in a way that blesses the community.
- Pray for the families who are still impacted by the chemical explosion of 2006 as well as the students, parents, and teachers feeling the loss of a respected teacher.

DAY 5 • SCHOOLS

Did you know that there are more than 125 schools on the North Shore? All of our schools, from parochial to prep to public, are part of our community and have a huge influence on our children.

Schools, teachers, and administrators have incredible influence in regard to shaping the children and young adults that run through their hallways each day. They help mold the ways in which children interact with the world. Schools need families to engage deeply in the education of their own children and the well-being of the schools in their community. This is a tremendous opportunity for those able to serve. Parents in particular have the opportunity to model genuine love as they interact in all circumstances with their schools.

What schools are located in your neighborhood? Write them down and pray for them today.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for school administrators who shoulder the responsibility of leadership. They face challenging decisions, sometimes choosing between the lesser of two inadequate outcomes. Pray that they would have God's presence and wisdom.
- Pray for peace to be evident in schools as parents, teachers, and administrators do their best for children. Pray for God's presence in the midst of their decisions.
- Pray for the influence schools in your community will have on the development of children and young adults.
- Pray for families of faith to demonstrate the gospel through service and compassion, and to model peace in the midst of any disagreements or concerns.
- Pray that schools in your community would train young people who are well-prepared for careers, college, and civic life. Pray that they would come to appreciate the responsibility that comes with the privilege of a quality education on the North Shore.

In 1633, the town of Agawam (later Ipswich) was settled and divided into parishes. The Chebacco Parish sought independence from the town for many decades, and was not officially incorporated until 1819, when it became known as the Town of Essex. The history of Essex is centered largely on the role of the church, though currently a large number of residents claim no religious affiliation (43% of Essex county claims no religious affiliation).

Today the small town consists of around 3,600 residents. Though once a prosperous shipbuilding center, Essex's main sources of income are now shellfish and tourism, as well as a flourishing antique industry. The tidal Essex River is the natural highlight of the town, attracting tourists, kayakers, and fisherman alike.

Did you know?

- 34.2% of the population in Essex has never been married.
- The town of Essex does include a high school. However, in 2000, Essex approved a plan to create a regional school district with Manchester-by-the-Sea.
- The fried clam was “invented” here, by Chubby Woodman, in 1916. The restaurant that bears his name celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2014.

Ways to pray:

- A significant portion of the Essex population is single—pray that these individuals will experience a sense of community and belonging.
- Pray for local businesses to thrive and invest in the community.
- Pray for the elderly population in Essex, that they might not experience isolation especially in the winter months.
- Pray for the town administrator to be effective, just, and discerning.
- Pray that churches in Essex would seek to work together both for the kingdom and for the good of the town.

DAY 7 • COLLEGE STUDENTS

Within a 10-mile radius of Beverly, there are six institutions enrolling 25,000 undergraduate and graduate students. They make up more than 10% of the area's population! These institutions bring thousands of new students to our doorstep every year: students hoping to find education, vocation, and friendship. They practice new-found independence; some hundreds or thousands of miles from home. Many start college with open minds and hearts; looking for honest answers to life's big questions. In a world that says "be whoever you want to be," they are trying to figure out the answer. Many of the decisions they make will set them on a path for life. Historically, NSCBC has been a place where young people will mature in faith and choose a church for the first time. Considering that only 20% of highly churched teens remain spiritually active by age 29, finding a church home during college is crucial.

Ways to pray:

- That God would cause students to seek and find Him and that believing students would mature in faith.
- Pray for local churches, InterVarsity, parachurch organizations, volunteers, and Christian staff/faculty who interact with students.
- Pray for international students who encounter Jesus and then bring their faith abroad.
- Pray for opportunities to embrace and invest in students. Pray as well that young people at NSCBC will find believers willing to invest in them when they attend college elsewhere.
- Pray for Gordon College to find success preparing students for Christian vocation in ministry, business, or cultural life. Pray for renewed relationships with the local community.
- Pray for Gordon-Conwell to develop vital connections with local churches. Pray that seminary would be a time for growing students' hearts as well as their heads.
- Pray for Endicott College's new Chaplain and InterVarsity group.
- Pray that parachurch ministries would find a foothold at North Shore Community College.
- Pray for the newly-restarted InterVarsity group at Salem State University and for the small InterVarsity group that meets at Montserrat College of Art.

DAY 8 • GLOUCESTER

Since its earliest days, Gloucester has been strongly connected to all things maritime. The town was officially incorporated in 1642 though it had been settled decades earlier, predating Boston. Along with the town of Essex, Gloucester became a major center for shipbuilding. The abundant forests in the area made shipbuilding an obvious choice. This led to foreign trade and commercial fishing industries which in turn required the supporting business of rope walks and sail makers.

Today, Gloucester is still known for its fishing industry but is increasingly expanding into other ventures. With a population of around 30,000, the majority of residents work in manufacturing, construction, and retail industries. Unfortunately, around 10% of the population is considered to be living in poverty. Gloucester is also well known for the Rocky Neck Art Colony which has provided working space for artists for over 150 years. This is no surprise since Gloucester can boast spectacular views year round but particularly in the summer. Its beaches, state parks, art galleries, and world class restaurants are a big draw for summer tourists.

Gloucester's ethnic heritage is a source of great pride, with almost 18% of the population claiming Italian descent and a combined 22% claiming Irish or Portuguese descent. It's no surprise, then, that a majority of the population is affiliated with the Catholic Church. This is celebrated each summer with Gloucester's St. Peter's Fiesta, St. Peter being the patron saint of fishermen.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for local fishermen who are impacted by a variety of factors such as federal regulation and climate change.
- Pray for local businesses to thrive and invest in the community. Ask God to encourage business owners and their workers.
- Pray for parents, students, teachers and administrators in Gloucester. Pray especially for high school seniors. One third of GHS seniors graduate with no immediate plans.
- Pray for those living in poverty to find resources and to develop new skills for better employment.
- Pray for the continued success of initiatives such as the ANGEL program where Gloucester police help addicts into treatment rather than putting them into custody.

DAY 9 • GOSPEL HINDRANCES

How did you come to faith? For those of us raised by one or more Christian parent, it can be difficult to remember. But others of us have very distinct memories of how our worldview shifted and God called us to himself. Do you recall which barriers you needed to cross before trusting him? There are countless reasons why individuals do not personally seek after God. Today we review a few possible hindrances for people living on the North Shore:

- **Distractedness.** Our lives are marked by constant distraction. Between work, family, entertainment, and technology, we've become busy and distracted to the point of fearing silence or self-reflection. Our culture makes it easy to ignore the deep questions of life.
- **Self-reliance.** The North Shore is a fairly wealthy, educated, and capable demographic. When there are no financial struggles and life's challenges can be easily worked out, we rely on ourselves. Self-reliance provides us security and comfort, blinding us to our spiritual need.
- **Sin and personal goodness.** The word sin is usually dismissed as an antique, oppressive, Puritan term. We forget how easily the hatred and selfishness we despise outside can so easily take up residence in us. We fail to recognize the failure of religion--apart from the Gospel--to fix our brokenness. Even people who identify as Christians can easily become convinced of their own goodness, forgetting their need for a savior.

Ways to pray:

- Ask God to reveal areas of your own life where the Gospel is being hindered.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of specific people you know who seem to be hindered by one of these issues. Pray for their eyes to be opened to God's mercy.
- Ask God to reveal his deep love to those who don't know him.

Originally a hamlet of Ipswich, the town of Hamilton was incorporated in 1793 and named after founding father Alexander Hamilton. Just 14.9 square miles of land, it includes the oldest operating polo field in the country, a world-renowned seminary, two organic farms, a methodist camp, a large recreational lake, ponds, two rivers, a state park, a golf course once home to the US Open, a private secondary school, a park with an M4 WWII tank named after General Patton, two zip codes and only one stop light that allows horses to cross Bay Road.

Many of the 8,000 residents are drawn to the rural character of their town: tree-lined scenic roads passing large estates, pastures, and open spaces. Development has favored agricultural, equestrian, and open space for recreational use over industry, creating a bedroom community where most people work elsewhere, including many commuting to Boston.

The median age for residents in 2014 was only 40, as many young families are drawn to locate there while their children attend the nationally-ranked schools. Some move on when their children graduate, creating a regular influx of new families. The source of diversity is primarily Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which draws students and their families from all over the world.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for those who feel isolated to be drawn into a welcoming community.
- Pray for young families to be supported as they raise children.
- Pray for freedom for those who may feel pressure to “keep up” with their friends and neighbors in a relatively wealthy community.
- Pray for the Acord Food Pantry to be well-resourced with volunteers and donations.
- Pray that Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, its faculty, students, and their families would be a blessing to the community.

DAY 11 • HOMELESSNESS

K is a mom of a spirited elementary-aged girl. She trained as a beautician and worked in salons, but her income wasn't reliable enough to afford rent, child care, and other necessities. She now works 5 or 6 days a week in a nursing facility. Yet affording a market-rate apartment in a nearby community seems out-of-reach. As a result, she and her daughter have experienced homelessness.

Experiencing homelessness disrupts education and puts children at risk of a variety of health conditions. Thirty years ago Massachusetts passed a law giving families the right to seek and receive shelter, placing those who outnumber available shelter beds in motels. Yet since 2007 homelessness rates ballooned as much as 75%. At one point 4,700 families were living in state-sponsored shelter or motels.

People may assume homelessness is primarily caused by substance abuse or chronic unemployment. Most often the cause of homelessness is simple math. The cost of housing on the North Shore crushes families whose primary earner has lower education, a short work history, or limited skills. Coupled with unsafe living environments and family break-up, people such as K are left with few options.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for the families who live in motels on the North Shore; specifically that God would meet them in what may be an isolating experience with both spiritual as well as physical resources.
- Pray for the families who live in shelters on the North Shore, such as Family Promise, HAWC in Salem, or the Inn Between in Peabody. Pray that these would be places of refuge and opportunity.
- Pray that homeless families would find good jobs and permanent housing.
- Pray that God would increase unity amongst believers in the diverse network of Family Promise churches. Pray that God would use their collaboration to bless the families, our communities, and to illustrate the radical hospitality at the heart the gospel.

DAY 12 • IPSWICH

Ipswich was founded in 1634 and is one of the oldest towns in the United States. Ipswich was originally part of a territory known as Agawam, which was purchased from the Native American chief, Masconomet, for 20 British Pounds. Today, Ipswich is a quaint little beach town with a population a little over 13,000. It attracts nature enthusiasts with state parks and most especially Crane Beach. It's also famous for its clams, celebrated annually at the Ipswich Chowderfest. Sadly, as a town very much part of the marine and fishing industries, Ipswich has found itself - like many of its neighbors - entwined in trafficking of drugs - specifically in opiates such as heroine.

Did you know?

- Renowned American poet Anne Bradstreet and MLB Hall of Fame Pitcher Dennis Eckersley were both from Ipswich (different centuries, of course).
- Actor Chevy Chase summered with his cousins at the Crane Estate.
- The Ipswich Middle/High School has one of the best performing arts programs in the state. Its choruses, bands, orchestra, symphony orchestra and theatre production have all won prestigious local and national recognition.

Prayer requests:

- For the continued growth and sustainability of Young Life in Ipswich as it ministers to high school students. Pray for local churches to be Gospel centered and outwardly focused.
- Ipswich Dinner Bell and The Open Door at the Ipswich Food Pantry are two organizations working to prevent hunger. Pray for their continued success and pray that many will find hope and meaningful connection with the volunteers who serve from local churches.
- In an upcoming town vote, Ipswich will consider combining Elementary schools as well as other major changes to lower-school education format. Please pray for sound judgment and wisdom as these decisions are made.

DAY 13 • LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The towns and cities on the North Shore are locally governed. Some have mayors, others a town council. There are a variety of governmental structures in place. But every town depends on the leadership of elected officials, either trusting their judgments or calling them into question. In certain respects, local governments have far greater impact on our lives than state and federal authorities. As Christians, we are called on to pray for our leaders (I Timothy 2:1-4).

- Which officials do you know in your town? Pray for them by name (look them up online if you're not sure).
- Is your town voting on important issues soon? Pray for those today, asking for wisdom and cool heads to prevail.
- Many towns are facing a drug problem, particularly opioid addictions and overdoses. These seem to be increasing as a result of prescription painkillers, perhaps following a surgery. Pray for town officials (as well as police and medical facilities) to assess the problem and seek wise ways to deal with this epidemic.
- A brief review of the commissions, boards, and committees listed on your city or town's website will quickly reveal that many wise, caring, and generous volunteers are needed to run a community. Pray that your community would find people of character to enter voluntary public service.

Lynn was founded in 1629 and remained rural until the eighteenth century when its reputation launched. The city became known as ‘shoe city’ for the manufacture of women’s high fashion shoes. Jan Ernst Matzeliger, a factory worker of African and Dutch descent, revolutionized manufacturing with his invention of the shoe-lass machine. Lynn’s spectacular coastline attracted wealthy vacationers from many cities. During prohibition, Lynn gained the ‘city of sin’ label for selling alcohol when surrounding cities prohibited it.

Just nine miles from Boston, Lynn mixes an urban downtown surrounded by historic homes, suburban neighborhoods, cultural and artistic points of interest, and natural resources including hiking and biking trails and beaches. With a population of 92,000, Lynn is the largest city in Essex County. In 2010 it was designated a Gateway City, because while it faces “stubborn social and economic challenges” it also contains “many assets of unrealized potential.” One of Lynn’s greatest assets is its rich cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. Those who spend time in Lynn schools or public spaces often describe the experience as “being at the United Nations.” While Lynn’s diversity is an enormous asset, it also presents challenges. A regular stream of newcomers occasionally strain the general posture of welcome. Schools, churches and social service agencies struggle to understand and meet the diverse needs of Lynners.

Ways to pray:

- that Christians in Lynn would seek the peace and prosperity of the city (Jeremiah 29:7)
- that people of good will would engage in the hard work of recognizing, repenting of and overcoming racial privilege and prejudice
- that residents would embrace the diversity of the city as an asset, recognizing it as a preview of ‘every tribe, every tongue, every nation’ joining together before God (Revelations 5)
- that people would put down deep roots, stay, and invest in the city’s well-being

DAY 15 • DAY OF PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

*I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness,
and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.*—*Psalm 7:17*

Today is a day of praise and thanksgiving to God for who he is and what he has done. Think back through the last few weeks and months. Consider God's work in your life and the lives of family and friends.

Write out your praise and thanks to him today:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

DAY 16 • DISABILITY

One in six people in Massachusetts is affected by a disability, which is a condition that damages or limits a person's physical or mental abilities. People can be affected by a physical disability, a developmental disability (such as Down Syndrome), or a chronic mental illness.

The North Shore played a significant role in our nation's mixed history with the treatment of people with disabilities. Until the 1980's, people were placed in institutions such as the notorious Danvers State Hospital. That institution in particular developed inhumane and even torturous practices; functioning more as a prison than a hospital. Thankfully such institutions are no longer operating. Individuals who experienced nearby institutions tell stories of abuse and neglect; feeling as if society rejected their humanity and hid them away. Those scars remain for older populations. Younger individuals now know a much more humane and inclusive system of supports, though that is not to deny some continued discrimination.

While Massachusetts has played a pioneering role in the integration of people with disabilities into community, inclusion and relationship development remain as challenges for many people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities. Church involvement is significantly lower among those with disabilities.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for emotional healing for those who lived in institutions or have experienced extreme prejudice and segregation. Pray that children with disabilities would be treated fairly and receive adequate support in the school system.
- Pray that those with chronic mental illness would find compassionate care and support.
- Pray for staff and leadership of agencies such as Bridgewell, Northeast ARC, EMARC and Triangle who provide services for people with developmental disabilities.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal ways that you individually and churches as a whole can be more welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Pray that the Gospel would go forth among people with disabilities and that North Shore churches would be blessed by the contributions of people with disabilities in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12:21-26.

DAY 17 • MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

Originally occupied by Native Americans, the town now known as Manchester-by-the-Sea was settled in 1629. These early settlers were primarily fishermen and seafarers; however, in the mid-1800s the town became a summer resort destination. Many notable people have built summer “cottages” in the town. Today, Manchester is best known for its seven beaches, renowned yachting harbor, and commercial lobstering. Boasting fewer “main attractions” than some of its neighbors, Manchester has a quaint and quieter feel, which is deeply valued by its approximately 5,200 residents.

Did you know?

- Manchester has 12.8 miles of tidal shoreline.
- The town’s most famous beach, Singing Beach, is so named because the sand actually “squeaks” or “sings” when walked upon.
- Captain Dusty’s, the popular ice cream shop near the harbor, was once the location from which the store’s namesake sold lobsters.
- In 1989, the town’s name was officially changed from Manchester to Manchester-by-the-Sea, out of concern that it was frequently being confused with Manchester, NH.
- 20% of residents commute more than an hour for work.

Ways to pray:

- Pray that God will stabilize and nurture families, especially those with parents commuting long hours to and from Boston.
- With a highly educated population, many of whom serve as executives, ask God to raise up strong Christian leaders to work in various fields.
- Pray that Manchester residents would graciously care for the natural resources in their community.
- Pray that churches in the town would experience renewal and growth, especially Cornerstone (formerly First Baptist) which recently called a new pastor.

The North Shore, while a beautiful and desirable place to live, is also an expensive place to live. Lots of people can find themselves in trouble financially; those with high incomes who are pinching every penny to maintain a certain lifestyle as well as those who find that even basic rent and groceries consume more than they can make.

Less obvious but quite specific to the North Shore is income segregation. In fact Essex County was recently called out as having some of the steepest growth in economic segregation in the nation. In the last 45 years, the proportion of families living in either the poorest or wealthiest neighborhoods has grown from 7% to 36%. (Source: Boston Globe) This means that increasingly those experiencing wealth and those experiencing poverty will manage to coexist on the North Shore without crossing paths.

Why does this matter? Many fear that this kind of segregation compounds both advantage and disadvantage. Moreover, it happens invisibly as communities operate locally without sharing responsibility for one another. Some fear this could catalyze racism and tear the fabric of society. Systemically, the North Shore needs affordable housing that accommodates working families, seniors, and those with a disability.

Prayer requests:

- Pray that God would empower you to push beyond your comfort zone and seek out friendships with those whose experiences may be different from your own.
- Pray that God would help you realize the full extent of his gospel love for others; that North Shore churches would be welcoming places to people regardless of income and will be marked by unity across racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Pray through your own personal or family budget. Ask that God would meet your daily needs. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of any aspects of your lifestyle that make it harder for others to understand gospel love.
- Pray that God would stir up a spirit of generosity, boldness, and creativity on the North Shore such that all people can live here with basic dignity.

DAY 19 • MARBLEHEAD

Marblehead was founded in 1629 and quickly became known for its commercial fishing industry. During the 1700s, timber and fish were key exports, and by the end of the century, Marblehead had become a wealthy, cosmopolitan town. The Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 resulted in great loss of life and industry for this mariner town, but prosperity was restored by the mid-19th century. Nestled on the rocky Atlantic coast, Marblehead became the home of several prestigious yacht clubs and many summer resort homes, even as remains today. In fact, the town has earned the title, “Yachting Capital of the World.”

While Marblehead is 19.6 square miles, 15.2 of those are water. Approximately 20,000 residents live in Marblehead. It’s been said that historically the people of Marblehead were in love with liberty and rugged individualism. This may still hold true today as residents prize free thinking and freedom very highly. In addition, there seems to be a growing disparity between the classes with tensions running high between the wealthy and lower income residents. This tension is becoming more visible in the public schools.

Did you know?

- Marblehead is so named because early settlers mistook the town’s granite ledges for marble.
- An epidemic in 1615-1619 claimed the lives of 80-90% of the Naumkeag Tribe, the original inhabitants of what later became Marblehead.
- Hannah, the first vessel commissioned by George Washington for the U.S. Navy, was staffed by a captain and crew from Marblehead (but technically commissioned in Beverly).
- Both Routes 114 and 129 terminate in Marblehead, right along the coast.

Ways to pray:

- Pray that residents would seek to live at peace and recognize their common responsibilities to each other.
- Pray for the churches of Marblehead to experience a renewed spirit, depending on God through Christ.
- Pray for relationships to deepen between Christian churches in Marblehead and Salem.
- Pray for local residents and government to find creative solutions to the challenges of housing affordability.

In Salem and Peabody, nearly 15% of the current population was born outside the United States. That number more than doubles in Lynn. All three cities are also considered “Gateway Cities,” mid-size communities where the median income and educational attainment are below the state average. They are layered with generations of new Americans—immigrants and refugees—who start a new journey here.

One such Beverly family is Sarah and Karlos. Born and raised in New England, Sarah traveled to Mexico on a mission trip where she met Karlos. They first filed a fiancé visa application in 2005 and Karlos became a naturalized citizen in 2011. The six-year journey was marked by fear of the unknown, immigration fees, a new language to learn, challenges finding employment, many tears, and a community of people that shared their struggle to navigate a difficult immigration system. This experience led them and others at High Rock North Shore to launch Open Door Immigration Services (www.odisma.org), a new ministry with a mission “to love our immigrant neighbors by providing affordable legal services.”

Refugees were launched into public consciousness last year as the plight of displaced Syrians was daily news. In 2015, Massachusetts resettled 85 Syrian refugees. Others came from Iraq, Sudan, Bhutan, Congo, and many other nations. Refugees cannot be painted in broad strokes; some arrive having experienced significant trauma; some arrive with no literacy skills in their native language; some arrive holding PhDs or having owned businesses. The vast majority are resettled by an agency such as Catholic Charities into one of just four Massachusetts communities including Lynn.

Ways to pray:

- Pray that the Lord would open opportunities for new friendships with neighbors from all over the world who are living right here on the North Shore.
- Pray for refugees who have been resettled on the North Shore. Pray that the Lord would raise up people to show them hospitality.
- Pray for families on the North Shore who are impacted by the deportation process.
- Pray for those who may experience isolation, fear, or discrimination in this new place. Pray that God would give believers opportunities to develop an uncommon unity across racial and even language barriers.

DAY 21 • NEIGHBORHOODS

A community is a social group with something shared in common such as proximity, interests, or beliefs. The church is a *community* of believers. Likewise, our neighbors are the *community* in which we live. A neighborhood can be marked by a common purpose such as raising kids, keeping lawns well manicured, looking out for each others safety. But a neighborhood can also be marked by indifference, disgruntled feelings, and strife. Wherever we live, neighbors can be our best friends, mere acquaintances, or thorns in our side. A neighborhood can feel like a safe haven or a battleground.

We all know that change starts at home. So regardless of what kinds of neighbors we have, we should ask, “Am *I* a good neighbor?” As Gospel-centered people, our relationships with our neighbors should be defined by peacemaking, self-sacrifice, truthfulness, and love.

Consider these practical ways that people in our own church have loved and cared for their neighbors:

1. Create a Neighborhood Directory with everyone’s name (including children).
2. Send notes of encouragement when you hear that a neighbor is struggling with loss or grief. Be willing to sit and listen. Offer to pray for them and do it right then so they know you mean it.
3. Provide meals for those recovering from surgery or that just had a baby, help with yard work and snow shoveling
4. Invite neighbors to come along on camping trips, beach days, picnic in the park, or AWANA.

Ways to pray:

- List the names of the neighbors you know and pray for them now.
- Is there conflict or bad blood between your neighbors? Pray that God would grant peace and use you as a peacemaker.
- Do you know your neighbors well? Pray for opportunities to discuss spiritual matters.
- Pray that you would develop a deep love for your neighbors which would lead to a genuine friendship marked by mutual trust. Pray for the influence schools in your community will have on the development of children and young adults.

The area known today as Peabody was originally part of Salem, established in 1629. Primarily wilderness and pasturelands, the area was occupied by farmers, but eventually became an industry hub, featuring grist, saw, and fulling mills (special mills for wool) in the 17th century. The two later became known for pottery and leather manufacturing. In 1868, the area then known as South Danvers was officially renamed Peabody, after famous philanthropist, George Peabody. The town was finally incorporated in 1916 and celebrates its centennial anniversary this year.

After losing its famous leather industry during the Depression, Peabody has largely recovered and today has found significant success in the retail, medical, construction, and manufacturing industries. The North Shore Mall offers over 140 specialty stores and several restaurants, and is a prime destination for shoppers all across the region. But of Peabody's roughly 52,000 residents only 25% work in Peabody, most working in nearby cities.

Did you know?

- 48% of residents are single (never married, widowed, or divorced).
- In 1919, Peabody was recognized as the world's largest producer of leather, with nearly 30 tanneries.
- When the town's namesake, George Peabody, died in 1869, his funeral procession from Maine to South Danvers was the longest in U.S. history.
- The downtown area has been plagued by flooding for many years whenever heavy rains occur in spite of significant efforts by the town to correct the issue.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for those in Peabody who feel isolated, particularly single moms and widows who carry a heavy financial and emotional burden.
- Pray for a renewed sense of unity and pride which would encourage investments in the community.
- Pray for churches to experience renewal which only the Gospel can provide, that they might seek the peace of the city.

DAY 23 • TRAFFICKING

Sex trafficking is defined as commercial sex acts induced by force, fraud, or coercion. People popularly believe trafficking is something that happens exclusively in places like Thailand or India. Others assume that when it happens here, women are internationals brought into the US. In reality, in New England and specifically on the North Shore, the majority of trafficking victims are locals and the average age for a woman to be trafficked is just 14. How prevalent is sex trafficking? One measure is the extent to which it is advertised. One 2015 study found 5,500 prostitution advertisements placed online every month in the Boston area alone. The North Shore ranked second for the region most targeted with such ads.

Today in all of New England there are just four safe homes available to provide aftercare to survivors of sex trafficking. These four safe homes have a total of 17 beds available. One of them, Amirah, happens to be located on the North Shore and provides a safe refuge where female survivors of sex trafficking are given individualized, whole-person, trauma-informed care.

Ways to pray:

- Lack of awareness for the issue has caused trafficking to expand. Pray that God would make this issue known.
- Pray that safe homes and survivor programs would be adequately funded and staff would have God's grace to persevere.
- Pray for freedom for survivors of trafficking. Specifically, pray that those living at Amirah would come to find the love and grace of God to be more powerful than the abuse they endured; that they would be able to break free from chains of exploitation mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- Pray for both those who have participated as buyers as well as those who have participated by selling other human beings; that God's truth would be made known and would set them free from their sin.

Rockport is a small seacoast town (population 7000) at the tip of Cape Ann that is known for its artisan shops, beautiful coastline and quaint, seacoast village “feel.” The town of Rockport was initially settled by fishermen in the late 1600s and then grew during the early 1800s by furnishing most of the nation’s granite from numerous quarries. It was incorporated as the town of Rockport in 1840. In the late 1800s, the first art studio was opened and many artists began visiting the town due to its scenic coastline. Rockport has since become known for its many art galleries and is home to the lobster shack referred to as “Motif #1,” one of the most painted and photographed scenes in America. Though quaint and popular with tourists, Rockport is facing declining year round population and the population itself is far less diverse than many other towns on the North Shore.

Did you know?

- Rockport was referred to as Granitetown during its period of granite industry
- Granite from the Rockport quarries was used in the building of the Panama Canal as well as the base of the Statue of Liberty in NYC.
- The original “Motif #1” fell into the harbor during the blizzard of 1978 and a replica was later rebuilt.
- A science teacher at Rockport High School was the inspiration for the character Buzz Lightyear in the Disney movie “Toy Story.”
- Rockport hosts a live nativity for Christmas with live animals and many community members participating.

Ways to pray:

- That the people of Rockport would be open to the gospel and see it as relevant to all aspects of life, not just a nice tradition.
- May the current, small churches of Rockport be strengthened
- Safety in the woods, ocean and quarries for all residents and tourists
- More families/persons would be able to find affordable places to live in Rockport and be welcomed by the community.

At a time when it seems people are more connected than ever, some say there is an epidemic of loneliness. Social media and ever-present technology give the illusion of connection, but distract from nurturing interpersonal relationships. Most people crave a sense of belonging and opportunities to participate in something bigger than themselves. Loneliness is different than being alone. Statistics suggest more than half of lonely people are married. It can be a subjective feeling that depends on one's expectations and the quality of their relationships. Most people will at some point experience loneliness, but statistics show that today a full 20% of Americans endure it intensely enough that they report profound unhappiness impacting their quality of life.

When we think of people who might be experiencing loneliness, perhaps the elderly neighbor or the stay-at-home parent you often see at the library come to mind. But not everyone who is lonely looks alone. The demands of family life and the pressure of a career can drive us inward and away from the simple discipline of saying hello or stopping to check-in. Praise God for calling people not out of but into communities where we can share fellowship with one another.

Ways to pray:

- Pray that God would help you to be more present in your everyday interactions. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you can minister to people experiencing loneliness.
- Pray for opportunities to invite people to church events such as MOPS (mothers of preschoolers), AWANA, college ministry, evening service. Pray as well for opportunities to meet new people at events in your community.
- Ask God to teach you how to practice hospitality and give you opportunities to get to know your neighbors.
- Pray for the senior center, sports leagues, and other recreational activities in your town, that they would be a rich and healthy place for adults to engage with one another.
- Pray for those who experience loneliness to discover the opportunity to commune with their Creator through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Salem was inhabited by Naumkeag people who had planted cornfields in the area when English Puritans arrived in 1626. These Puritans founded the first congregationally-governed church in North America. The third pastor of that church was Roger Williams, who left to found what was later called Rhode Island. Soon Salem became known as the home of elite Yankee families, including that of author Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was also a major port for the Massachusetts Bay Colony and developed into a center of trade with Asia. In 1812, missionaries Ann and Adoniram Judson sailed from Salem's Derby Wharf on their pioneering mission to Burma. As Salem industrialized, thousands of French-Canadian, Italian, and Irish people settled in the city. Since the 1970s, the city has also gained a large Dominican population.

Salem's population is about 41,000, and it has remained at roughly that size for a century because it is already densely populated (about 5,000 people per square mile). In recent years, Salem has been changing in ways that have created tension between longtime residents, newcomers, and visitors. The tourist industry has grown immensely, the state university campus is rapidly expanding (up to 9,215 students in 2015), and the Latino population has reached around 11% of the city population. These many changes have given Salemites the opportunity to reflect greater diversity which is a core value for the town that was infamous for burning witches. Yet the reality is that growing pains have challenge all residents in some regard.

Prayer requests:

- Pray that local churches and Christians can help bring peace and understanding to Salem's conflicts in a way that shows who Jesus is.
- Pray for the wellbeing of individuals and families who are affected by rising apartment rents. Pray for the rising tensions between residents and outside developers.
- Pray for children in low-income families who are disproportionately affected by family instability, inadequate housing, and crime.

The Bible views old age—long life—as a gift, and white hair as a crown of glory. And that picture is true for many elderly Americans, who are living longer than ever. The average life expectancy for Americans is now nearly 79 years; and those who make it to age 65 can expect to live, on average, to their mid-80s or longer. Those who can afford to retire have time to enjoy activities that may not have been possible for them during their working and family-rearing years. But for others the longer years can mean increased loneliness, insecurity and fear of outliving their money, loss of mobility due to health issues, and boredom from having all kinds of time and few meaningful things to do.

Ways to pray:

- Pray for elderly residents who are still in their homes – that they will have neighbors who check in on them regularly and care for them in practical ways.
- Pray for elderly who feel financially insecure – that they will learn about financial assistance available to them and that they will not be victims of fraud (even by family members).
- Pray for the health of elderly persons – that they will take advantage of low-cost and free meals at their local senior centers or from Meals on Wheels.
- Pray for the families of elderly persons with dementia or Alzheimer’s – that they will be strengthened and given the wisdom to make decisions about their relative’s care.
- Pray for all those, professionals and volunteers, who serve the elderly – that they will treat each person with dignity and honor, seeing the person and not the person’s set of problems.
- Pray that the elderly will find meaningful ways to share the wisdom they have gained in life with younger relatives and acquaintances.
- Pray for those who do not know Christ, that as they approach the end of life they might seek him now.

Who are some of the elderly people you know? List them by name and pray for them today.

For many residents of the North Shore, family life is a high priority. Parents seek wisdom, social support, and strength to raise their children. Children are a tremendous responsibility, but do not come with a “how-to” manual! Parents, extended family, friends, and mentors have a tremendous opportunity to invest in children and to connect with others who share common hopes, struggles, and goals. The North Shore is a place with many young families so most communities are relatively well-resourced with programs aimed at serving them. While these programs serve families well, parents can still feel burdened as they try to juggle children’s activities, educational and physical needs, as well as other responsibilities.

Ways to pray:

- That families would find the Source of wisdom and selfless love needed for raising children.
- That children, children’s activities, and the shared desire to parent well would meaningfully connect families inside and outside the church.
- That parents would channel their desire to see their kids “succeed” in healthy ways.
- For AWANA, MOPS, VBS, and other children’s ministries at our own and other churches.
- For the 8,000 foster children living in Massachusetts. Pray that loving homes would say yes to fostering children. Pray especially for older youth as they age out of foster care and most especially, those who become homeless.
- For the parents of children with disabilities as they navigate services, provide constant care, make decisions, and even plan care for their children after they are gone. Pray that God would renew their trust in him and give them comfort, strength, and respite.
- For children to encounter the living God and come to saving faith. Pray that Christian parents would have wisdom to help their children read the Bible in order to understand the Gospel, not simply reinforce certain behaviors.
- For grandparents or other family members who have stepped into a parental role. Pray that they would have wisdom and perseverance.

DAY 29 • REMEMBER & REFLECT

Only take care and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.

—Deuteronomy 4:9a

Today is a good time to review the things that God has been doing in your life and in your community. Look back through the prayer guide, reflect over the last month, and make note of the following:

1. Which items of prayer have convicted you?
2. Have you witnessed an answer to prayer?
3. Has a particular topic or issue been on your mind?
4. Have you experienced the Holy Spirit at work in a particular area of your life?

Spend some time thanking God for his faithfulness and ask him to continue working on your heart and the hearts of your family, friends, and neighbors, drawing us all closer to him and his vision for our our lives.

DAY 30 • ENLARGE OUR HEARTS—Bobby Warrenburg

Over the course of this prayer guide we have asked God to work among the communities in which we live. And rightly so, for we know that the North Shore needs to wake up to the riches and wonder of Christ-for-us. And yet...church historians note that in times of spiritual awakening and renewal, the first people to “wake up” are often the church. The church experiences a fresh re-discovery of the holiness of God, depth of our sin, and love of God revealed in the Cross. In short we see God and ourselves more clearly. So to that end I'd love to commend the following prayer that we might re-discover the riches of the Gospel:

*My Father,
Enlarge my heart, warm my affections, open my lips,
supply words that proclaim 'Love Lustres at Calvary.'
Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy,
cast off that I might be brought in,
trodden down as an enemy
that I might be welcomed as a friend,
surrendered to hell's worst
that I might attain heaven's best,
stripped that I might be clothed,
wounded that I might be healed,
athirst that I might drink,
tormented that I might be comforted,
made a shame that I might inherit glory,
entered darkness that I might have eternal light.
My Savior wept that all tears might be wiped from my eyes,
groaned that I might have endless song,
endured all pain that I might have unfading health,
bore a thorny crown that I might have a glory-diadem,
bowed his head that I might uplift mine,
experienced reproach that I might receive welcome,
closed his eyes in death that I might gaze on unclothed brightness,
expired that I might forever live....
Go forth, O conquering God, and show me
the cross, mighty to subdue, comfort and save.*

—*Love Lustres at Calvary, in The Valley of Vision*

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