

ALBANIA

Ephesians 6:18 - The Message.

“In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.”

A brief overview.

Albania is a place of great contrasts with a population of 3 million people. It is full of possibilities for the gospel and yet it faces deep challenges also. The apostle Paul was the first to preach the gospel to the Albanians according to Romans 15:19, but the percentage of those today claiming to be evangelical believers is 0.5 -1 per cent of the population and some would cast doubt even on that figure!

Many Albanians leave towns and villages for Tirana and for foreign countries. This leaves local churches in a constant state of flux and makes establishing churches incredibly difficult. Establishing church leadership is even harder.

Even to this day, there is a sense of despair and hopelessness that hangs over the land. Rampant corruption, injustice in the justice system, Mafia activity, massive unemployment, rising prices and punitive levels of taxation all combine to suck the life out of the nation. Poor health care, falling standards in education and an utterly inadequate social care system add to this sense of despair. Though the tourist industry in Albania has begun to grow, ordinary people see very few benefits from it.

The church in general, and this would include our congregation in Sauk, faces a number of challenges. One is to see faithful men leading their families and the church. They have had no examples as to what it means to be a Christian husband and father and most men split their time between work and the coffee bar so even secular examples have not been of help. Thousands of Albanians are in severe debt simply to provide family members with medical care or the medicines that they need. Temptations outside of work include gambling and there is simply nowhere for men to go in their spare time which does not have temptations associated with it.

The congregation in Sauk has been a part of TNC for 15 years, and God has done many wonderful things in peoples lives there over the years. May we spend this day in prayer both for our brothers and sisters in our Sauk Congregation, and for those that they are reaching out to with the love of Jesus.

1. ADORATION: 3 mins

“ Ah Sovereign Lord, You have made the Heavens and the earth, by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

- **Adore Him for His Sovereignty over all things.** There is absolutely nothing that happens in the universe that is outside of God’s influence and authority. As King of kings and Lord of lords, God has no limitations. Nothing is too hard for Him. He is the ultimate source of all power, authority, and everything that exists. Only He can make those claims, and only He is worthy of our worship.
- **Adore Him as Creator of heaven and earth** - think of some of the beauty you have seen lately and adore Him for His creativity.

As with all our intercession on these days of prayer, listen to what the Lord might be saying to you as to how to pray. This list of prayer points is a guide. Is there something else the Lord wants to say as we pray through these?

2. PRAYING FOR OUR SAUK CONGREGATION IN ALBANIA.

It is crucial that we pray for each of the Congregations at “The Neighbourhood Church.” Our congregation in Sauk, needs the prayers of the whole church. In order to pray well for them, there are a number of areas in which we might focus. Please do not feel the need to just pray the whole list like a shopping list. The Lord may stop and have you pray into one or two of the points in a deeper way. Pay attention to the Lord’s guidance on this.

A. Leadership.

We need to pray for the leaders of the Sauk Congregation. Here are some suggestions around how we might pray for the congregations leaders...

1. Klement and Xhevi (and Girls)

1. Health - the family has had numerous colds and flu’s this winter
 2. Spiritual Protection - the devil is always seeking to thwart the efforts of those who are church leaders. He often attacks the families.
 3. Klement’s Leadership - pray that God would sustain Klement as he leads. Pray that he would know God’s presence, His power and His favour.
2. **Leadership Team** - for God to help them to be unified in their approach and discernment as to the next steps for the congregation. Pray that God would help them to be persistent in the discipling of those who are yet young in their faith.
 3. **The Foundation** - the congregation is seeking to become a legitimate entity in Albania. This allows them to function within the bounds of the law and tax structures and to start and operate various ministries. Please pray for the process to move forward and for them to receive favour with the government in the

process. This is the equivalent to churches here in Canada attaining charitable status.

B. Congregation.

In Paul's epistle to the Roman church he writes, "***So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ***" (Rom. 15:19). The region of Illyricum includes the modern region of Albania. Paul continues, "***It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known...***" (Rom. 15:20). Today there are still many places in Albania where Christ is not known. Spend a few mins praying for equipping, boldness and courage for the congregation to proclaim the gospel to those that do not know the Lord. Please also pray for:

We need to continue to pray for the people of the Sauk Congregation. Here are some of the prayer needs of the people.

1. **Rosa** - YWAM - Rosa has been working with YWAM for many years. We need to pray for her ministry and for her funding
2. **Lirim** - Away with Army. Pray for the sustenance of his faith and for the family back home
3. **Young Adults** - transitioning to adults and their faith maturing. Some feel the pressure of jobs and growing up in their faith.

YOUTH

Arlinda

Ervini

Melisa Sina

Melisa

Andreina

Vjordis

Delon

Kantonisa

C. Ministry.

1. **Men's and Women's Groups** - The establishment of both men's and women's groups over the past year, having about 8 non-Christians in each, has brought great joy. Pray for the leaders as they seek to discern God's work in these peoples lives. Pray for the people, that they will hear and receive the good news of Jesus. Pray specifically for:
 - a. ***Velo and Cere*** - parents of Melisa and Andreina. Pray they continue to come to the Meetings and learn about Jesus.
 - b. ***Meti and Nadire*** - Pray Nadire decides to follow Jesus. Also that her husband comes to know Jesus.
 - c. ***Shyqo***- an intellectual who is open to Jesus
 - d. ***Lame*** - Pray for Klement to have an opportunity to meet with him.
 - e. ***Teuta*** - has been coming for a couple of months to the meetings.
 - f. ***Eli*** - She is coming regularly on Sunday. She needs to understand the gospel simply.

She cannot read.

2. **Bethany Orphanage** - We have sought to be supportive of the Bethany Orphanage over the last 10-12 years. Our relationship with Bob and Cathy has brought great joy to us as The Neighbourhood Church. Please pray for ...
 1. **Bob and Cathy** - Bob's health has been difficult the last number of months after suffering with Covid. Please pray for full health. Cathy has been caring for Bob as well as helping to travel back and forth to the US for the birth of their first grandchild. Pray for strength for them both.
 2. **Funds for kids** - funding is always difficult and much needed for orphanages. Please pray for the funding to come in for the kids to be well cared for.
 3. **Our involvement** - please continue to pray for how we might serve alongside the orphanage in days to come.
3. **Love in Action** - since the beginning of the pandemic, the Sauk Congregation has sought to help those in need of food in the village to be able to "have enough." Please pray for:
 1. Funds - More funding to be able to help people in the village.
 2. Next Project - For discernment to what God is asking them to do.
 3. The Congregation - For participation from the whole of the congregation.

D. KSS

KSS is the Sports Club of Sauk. It is a separate entity from the church, and has been set up to see youth and families thrive in the village using the tool of sports. There are a number of important things for which to pray.

1. **Staff** - there are currently two staff members of KSS
 1. **Klement** - is the director of the sports club. ***Please pray for him in his role as he seeks to manage the activities of the club off the court and as he seeks to build the business through raising money and interest locally.***
 2. **Laura** - is the Technical Director. This means that she is in charge of all of the on-court activities. Laura is not a Christian, but has a heart for the kids. She is very talented and has been a wonderful asset to the club. ***Please pray for her, for her family and for her relationship with the athletes. Pray she will come to know Christ. Pray that many relationships will be built in the neighbourhood through her excellent coaching.***
2. **Pray: For the establishment of teams and ministry**
 - a. **Teams** - we currently have Fitkids (Fitness and games for U10), a girls and boys basketball team, girls volleyball. Hoping for boys volleyball as well as boys and girls soccer.

b. Ministry. - Pray that the Sauk congregation will show interest and involvement.

Pray for the development of a tutoring ministry for the kids of the club.

Pray for opportunity to have relationship with the families.

After your time of prayer, if there is something you sense the Lord may be saying to us as a Church for this congregation, please let me know and I can pass it on to the elders. shelley@southside.ca