



# PRAYING OUR WAY FORWARD

## **Praying Our Way Forward Resources**

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### **Sunday, September 17: Listening for God's Voice**

I Corinthians 13: 1-3

#### *Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this day praying our way forward, united not by blood, race or nationality but by love — a love that places the “you” and “we” above the “I” and “me.” It is a love so great that it originates from the source of all love. We, your people, O God, come seeking your love: A love more powerful than all our hurts, all our doubts, all of our fears of each other. A love that meets us where we are and calls us to more than we can ever think or imagine. A love that can change our lives as we listen to you and the voices of others. Amen.

#### *Prayer for the Journey*

We pray now for the mission of the United Methodist Church to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and for the ongoing work of the Commission on a Way Forward. Fill your servants with the breath of your Holy Spirit. May they seek your wisdom, knowledge, love, joy, discernment, and guidance as they follow your leading. Continue to teach your church each day what it means to love – not a love that we have conjured up in our minds, or a love that we have seen on movie screens or read from facebook, but real love. Challenge us in the ways we have chosen *not* to love. Move us toward genuine patience, kindness and humility. Let us be moved to love especially when it is inconvenient and difficult. Teach us today what it means to love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you and your church during a morning worship service to offer prayer for God's leading for the discussions and decisions of the Commission on a Way Forward and the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### **Monday, September 18: God's Love in Christ Jesus**

Romans 8: 31-39

#### *Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this new day praying our way forward, thankful for God's faithfulness, inclusive Spirit and steadfast love that has been waiting for us from the moment we woke up to experience another remarkable morning. Now reveal to us, Holy One, how we might serve, love you and truly be your hands and feet in unexpected places today. Awaken my senses, renew a right Spirit within me to do no

harm, do good and stay in love with you, acting in tune with the rhythm of the day you have for me. God is good! God is merciful! God is present!

*Prayer for the Journey*

Holy and Living God, we pray now for your purposes and mission in the world and all who are working to ask and listen for your guidance at this important time in the life of the church. We praise you for never giving up on us, for loving us with a love from which nothing can separate us. May we become more aware of your activity and presence, that we will see you more clearly at work in the midst of all the disruptions and decisions of the day. Help us to speak up, risk hearing one another together in community, seeing each other's gifts while addressing difficult questions. Continue to shape our conversations toward ultimately being in tune with your will and way. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you and your church to share in small groups as they pray for the work of the Commission on a Way Forward. Encourage them to pray for the Commission while their own local church will also discuss and form practices during this important time of living out ways of doing no harm, doing good and staying in love with God.

**Tuesday, September 19: *The Nature of Christian Freedom***

Galatians 5: 4-15

*Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this new day praying our way forward, grateful for a God of Surprise, who shows up when we least expect it and calls us to a freedom to serve one another-- loving neighbor as self. You know us, O God. You understand our worries, our misconceptions, and our easy ways of making people seem small and non-existent. This is, however, your day to help me open my heart with your transforming love and forgiveness. May we place our total trust in you to take us to the people and places we need in order to be your healing and hope in the world. It's good to praise you at all times for this fresh start you offer me and others on the journey.

*Prayer for the Journey*

You have made us for yourself, O God, and called us to be a covenant people -- a people set apart. We are set apart not for privilege but for service; not for special advantage but for responsibility. Our values and priorities, our pursuits and passions reflect your heart -- a heart of love for the poor, a heart for justice, a heart of compassion for the broken. Transform us, merciful Savior, in those places where we are still attracted to the culture's agenda of power, money, beauty and influence. Save us from serving unworthy gods, from chasing after every quick-fix advertisement for being successful, from investing our days in the temporary rather than the eternal. Thank you for the call to be yours and for the grace to live that call. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** List some of the spiritual mentors in your life such as a pastor, Sunday school teacher, youth leader, camp counselor, or another church leader who has modeled servant leadership and has had a positive impact on your life. Call, write or email them a brief note of appreciation for what you saw and learned from them.



## **Wednesday, September 20: A Life Pleasing to God**

1 Thessalonians 4: 9-12

### *Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

God of creation, healing and new beginnings, we start this day praying our way forward. We have set aside this time and place as sacred space in which to encounter your Spirit, to listen for your voice and be transformed by the reality of your presence. Open our eyes, our ears and our hearts so that we may experience you in unexpected and remarkable ways. Shine your light into the recesses of our lives, exposing to us that which holds us back from living abundant, free and joyful lives as disciples. Give to us your word of love, justice, mercy and peace that we need to receive in order to be a bridge of unity and hope in an often violent and divisive world. It's a good day. It's your day and mine together, and I feel blessed knowing you are with me to pray it through! Amen.

### *Prayer for the Journey*

Faithful and Reconciling God, come now and heal the brokenness of our communities, churches and world, and speak to our bias that keeps us from living as vessels of your love. We struggle to understand others and to be understood. Ignite our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth; release any anger or hostility that keeps me from building meaningful relationships with those I feel are different from me. Instead, teach me to examine myself. Search inside our hearts and take away those thoughts and perceptions that do not belong there. Help us to search inside your heart and put the fruits of your Spirit inside our own. May this be a time of Holy Conferencing and Holy Communion, leading us to forgiveness, apologies, righteousness, redemption and gratitude for all God's children. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you to pray and seek reconciliation this week with a family member or someone else in your life you need to forgive or from whom you need forgiveness.

## **Thursday, September 21: God's Stewards of God's Grace**

1 Peter 4: 1-2, 7-11

### *Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this day praying our way forward. Loving God, we come as your people, hungry for your word, longing for your nearness, seeking your guidance and always your refuge and strength. Breathe new life into our lives this day. Touch us and heal our brokenness. Fill our hearts with compassion and mercy. Empower us anew to be your witnesses in all the world. And through our sharing and receiving our stories of faith, seeking to understand and appreciate one another's journey, may we see your face in others. Amen.

### *Prayer for the Journey*

God of peace, we your people live in times when we are fearful, anxious, curious, and excited. Come into our midst, calm our restless hearts, and help us hear your call to go and transform the world. Give us confidence to receive your saving and life giving words, your words of good news, and your words of life. In our work together, help us like good stewards to be hospitable to one another without complaining or seeking to be the only voice in the room. Encourage me, with practice and persistence, to be able to listen, speak and act when you nudge me. May your peaceful presence ultimately make us a forgiven and forgiving people, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you to write down your favorite passage of scripture that helps you to be more intentional about loving God and your neighbor. Review your schedule today, and identify one way you will reflect this passage in the activities of your day.

**Friday, September 22: Imitating Christ's Humility**

Philippians 2: 1-4

*Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this new day praying our way forward, once again humbled and grateful for you, our compassionate God, being our ever-present Companion and Guide. I am thankful that I don't have to begin the day with a google search or a navigation device but that you have tracked me down with your loving grace and mercy. I bring myself to you in these moments -- all my uncertainty, all my confusion, my exhaustion, and also my joy, readiness and, in your presence, an assurance of power and promise. As I embark upon the new and unfinished tasks waiting for me, help me to listen and recognize your still small voice. Slow me down so that I can hear every gentle Word of direction, instruction, assurance, and love note as I desire to live as your faithful child this day and always. I want to get better at being a disciple. I want to get better at following your lead. With this amazing call you have given me, I am seeking to make things better for all who are poor and oppressed. Now move me out of the way so that I am only attentive to YOU. Amen.

*Prayer for the Journey*

Holy God, we thank you for reminding us once again that you are Lord of all. You are Lord of our days, Lord of our world, Lord of your church. You are Lord of our present and our future. You reign sovereign over all and are never caught by surprise, never at a loss for what to do, never overwhelmed by the creation or the creatures you have made. We thank you for the reassurance of your presence. We trust in your eternal purposes. We rest in your bountiful grace. May our hearts become more deeply attuned to your action in the world, that we might demonstrate the humility and obedience of Christ wherever we are. This is our prayer. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you and your church to plan a brief service – A Prayer for the Way Forward, which will include Holy Communion. It will be an open table of God's grace, where the broken bread makes us one body and the cup of salvation grants us unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. May it be so.

**Saturday, September 23: Prayer for the Readers**

Ephesians 3: 14-4:6

*Becoming Aware of God's Presence*

We start this new day praying our way forward, recognizing that this completes a week of praying for the faithful witness of the United Methodist Church, the work of the Commission and the church's future. God, we give you thanks for drawing all of us together during this time as your church family. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us that we may be an example of the unity that exists between you and your Son. Do not allow competing voices and differences to tear us apart, but unify us in our discussions, our deliberations, and our prayers. And once decisions have been made, renew us into a transformed church. Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. Amen.



*Prayer for the Journey*

John Wesley's "Covenant Prayer" (in modern English)

I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will.  
Partner me with whomever you want.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,  
Exalted for you or brought low for you.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
You are mine, and I am yours.  
So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven. Amen.

***Spiritual Exercise:*** We invite you to take a six- to eight-hour fast of water and juice at a time that is appropriate with your schedule. Our prayer focus throughout the day is two-fold: "We are praying that God will help us to fulfill the mission of the church, and we are praying to be one in Christ."

