

# Week 2

## Missouri Annual Conference 21 Days of Prayer

Missouri Conference of the  
United Methodist Church

May 24- 30, 2013

Week 2

# 21 Days of Prayer

## Praying Hands & Dirty Fingernails

This 21 Days of Prayer Journal, is designed as a holistic and integrative means to prepare ourselves as clergy and laity, as local churches and as the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church for the holy business of this year's Annual Conference, June 7 – 10, 2013.

Each week there is an article from Bishop Schnase's book "Remember the Future: Praying for the Church and Change." The article is provided for you to read at the start of each week. It sets the tone for the week's spiritual disciplines and guided means of grace. Based upon the weekly focus there are six practices for the week. These practices vary in form and discipline. I strongly encourage you to do one each day as directed. The order is not as important as your doing them. Plan accordingly with your week so that you are doing them with intention and forethought. Having an accountable prayer partner or group is often helpful, so consider sharing this journal with your congregation so they may also be in intentional prayer. We may also consider using them with a small group.

The Great Commandment tells us to love the Lord our God with our full selves; with our mind (intellect), heart (emotions), soul (intuition and divine instinct) and body (physical). We are also to love others as ourselves. These prayer forms are designed to facilitate an experience of grace as you grow more fully in love with God and others. Through the integration of these various forms it is my prayer that we may each first come to a greater understanding of the style of CONTEMPLATIVE ACTION God has uniquely imprinted upon our individual and cumulative lives. Second, I pray that we may have a greater understanding and appreciation of the various prayer forms as they are lived out in the world. May our hands, both praying and serving, be the missional, transformational, kingdom building, peace-making, Christ-like hands at work in the world.

My prayers are with you all as God prepares us for what I believe will be a Spirit-filled Conference.

Rev. Jenn Klein

## Weekly Focus and Prayer Forms

**Week One: May 17 – 23, 2013 (Last week’s focus, see download available on line.**

- Article: Praying Hands and Dirty Fingernails
- Focus: Prayer and Service: The integration of piety AND mercy.

**Week Two: May 24 – 30, 2013**

- Article: The Most Significant Arena
- Focus: Being AND Doing: Missional – through the actions of prayer and service we embody God’s mission for the church.

**Week Three: May 31 – June 6, 2013 (Next Week’s Focus)**

- Article: At the Margins
- Focus: As we embody the lifestyle of prayerful service, or contemplative action, we take it to the margins of the church and live it into the world; meeting engaging, serving, companioning a broken world in Christ-like ways.

# 21 Days of Prayer

## Week Two Prayer Focus Themes

1. **Reading the Article:** The Most Significant Arena, by Robert Schnase. (Need the provided Article from “Remember the Future,” pen and journal)
2. **Sabbath** – Scripture reading and quote for the day. (Need pen and journal)
3. **Contemplative Prayer Form** – Guided Meditation (Need pen and journal).
4. **Walking Prayer And Body Prayer** – A guided prayer walk and body prayer (print out guided prayer focus, pen and journal)
5. **Art and Soul Prayer Form** – Mind Mapping Acts 2.42 (Need paper or journal, and colored markers/pencils)

6. **Day of Service and Self Examine** – (Need whatever is necessary for your service activity, pen and journal)
7. **Fasting** – Normal Fast as a means of cleansing and preparation for the mission of Christ. (Need pen and journal)

**Weekly prayer forms:** Remember to plan ahead and practice one of the following disciplines each day. The order is not as important as the practice. I suggest you read the article each Friday and honor Sabbath on Sunday, then do the remaining disciplines as you are able with your weekly schedule.

Use the following prayer as a daily prayer for the week. Write it on an index card and place it somewhere that you'll see it regularly throughout the week. A possible location (s) might be on a post-it note or index card placed on the bathroom mirror, refrigerator, as a book mark for your Bible or book you are studying, on the dashboard of your car, etc.

### *Daily Prayer*

***With you, Lord, we get a fresh start, we're created new. Help us abandon ways that no longer work, and take up practices that bind us to you and to others, with purpose and vitality. Help us see the world through your eyes, Lord, and remake us so that people see you in our eyes. Amen.'***

# THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ARENA<sup>ii</sup>

Methodism began as a way of life. Wesley organized people into societies, classes, and bands in order to provide a disciplined accountability to sustain growth in Christ and growth in service. Early Wesleyans were chided for their “methodical” adherence to practices that included worship, the sacraments, daily prayers, Bible study, classes, giving to the poor, visiting the sick and imprisoned. Every organizational innovation fostered that way of life. Circuits were created as a means of providing the sacraments and for deploying leaders. Class tickets were given and giving records were maintained, not merely to provide an accounting for the aggregate totals, but to hold each person accountable for growth in Christ. Wesley did not establish faith communities so that he could have a conference; he established a conference to support the work of Christ through faith communities.

Throughout the history of Methodism, the primary means by which we have brought people into this way of life has been through faith communities. Congregations offer the invitation and embrace of Christ. They offer worship that connects people to God and that stimulates the change of heart that transforms lives so that people see the world through God’s eyes.

Congregations provide the means to grow in faith through small groups, Bible studies, support groups, and the care of souls. People cooperate with the Holy Spirit in their own sanctification, growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God. And fruitful congregations help people discern the calling of God to ministries of service, mission, and justice. They provide avenues for life-changing, sacrificial service that transforms the world. Congregations draw people into the body of Christ, and through congregations God changes the world.

Consider the impact of congregations on your own life. Suppose we could extract from your life all the influences that God has had on you through congregations. Imagine we could pull out of your mind and heart all the thousands of sermons you have heard, the tens of thousands of hymns you have sung, the pastoral prayers and personal devotions that have formed you. Remove from your life all the pastors, friends, colleagues, laypersons, youth leaders, and teachers who have encouraged and embraced you in the faith. Extract from your soul all the work projects, the meetings, the soup kitchens, mission projects, hospital visits and support from others you have experienced. Remove all the volunteer hours, stewardship campaigns, mission fairs, camp experiences, and youth ministries.

If someone removed from your life all the influences congregations have ever had on you, you’d be someone totally different. The congregations you have belonged to have changed and shaped you. Congregations are a primary means by which God reaches into our lives to work on our behalf to create us anew, to claim us as God’s own, and to call us to God’s service. It is through

congregations that God's Spirit shapes how we understand ourselves, how we relate to our families, how we view community, and how we participate in the world.

Jesus intentionally formed his followers into a community of disciples to fulfill this mission. United Methodist congregations exist today for the same mission for which Jesus gathered his disciples and for which the Holy Spirit unified those who gathered on the day of Pentecost. The United Methodist Church makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by repeating over and over again what has happened in your life and mine. In small congregations and large, in urban and rural churches, in every place and culture and language, God works through faith communities to change lives.

The Call to Action invites the leaders of The United Methodist Church to redirect the flow of attention, energy, and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The focus on congregations is not about institutional survival, an obsession on numbers, or a fear of failure. It is about returning to the basics. In the first sentence that immediately follows our mission statement in the Book of Discipline, we say, "Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs" (§120, italics added).

Imagine if we really allowed this priority on Christ's mission through congregations to direct us in our alignment of resources, personnel, and energy in every district, conference, and general agency of the church. Imagine bishops and superintendents and conference staff and lay leaders and pastors viewing Christ's mission through congregations as job one. Imagine if reaching the poor, the vulnerable, the hurting, and the lonely with ministries driven by the grace of God focused our energies. Imagine fostering congregational leadership and spiritual depth and invitational culture and courageous witness in every community of faith. Imagine how God could use our churches all the more to change lives, foster communities in Christ, and relieve suffering if we really behaved as if local churches provide the most significant arena through which we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Imagine!

## ART AND SOUL PRAYER FORM

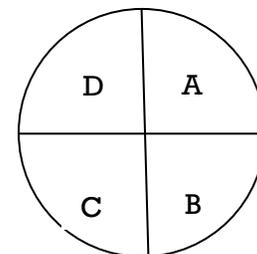
***“Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple making occurs.”<sup>iii</sup> – Robert Schnase***

***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2.42***

At the heart of Wesleyan Spirituality is the theology of balance. As United Methodists it is important for us to note that John Wesley’s sense of spiritual balance was a “kind of ‘both-and’ rather than a compromise between two extremes.”<sup>iv</sup> Mack B. Stokes called it “Christianity with vital balance.”<sup>v</sup> In the congregation I serve I have referred to this special *via media* (middle way) as the “sweet spot”, the place in which two opposites live together in tension, one complimenting the other. It is the best place for faithful people to carry on grace-filled conversation over conflictive and divisive topics and it is the space of blessing in which God’s grace is most active. When it is found, just as in baseball or golf, one knows it, the effort is effortless and the results are two-fold. It is in the “sweet spot” that a lifestyle of Contemplative Action takes place in transformative ways. Contemplative Action is an internal attitude and external way of being present in the world. It is an AND not an OR.

AND is a conjunction, used to connect words, phrases, items, ideas and people together. AND also implies that the items being brought together are of equal importance and value. When held in tension with one another, one is able to grasp a greater, deeper, more defined understanding and sense of purpose. This is true for Christian spiritual formation, both for individuals seeking to establish a personal rule of life, and for the community of faith seeking to define a clear pathway of discipleship. Today’s Bible passage affirms this truth and reality.

- Today, as a prayer form of art and soul you will need your journal and pen. Read Acts 2.42-46 in its entirety. Reread Acts. 2.42 (written above).
- Draw a circle and place a line horizontally through the middle of the circle. Do the same thing vertically. Mark each quadrant as illustrated; A, B, C and D.
  - In Quadrant A write “Apostle’s Teachings” (This reflects how one is to “Love the Lord AND Others with all our mind).



- In Quadrant B write “Fellowship” (This reflects how one is to “Love the Lord AND Others with all our heart).
- In Quadrant C write “Prayers” (This reflects how one is to “Love the Lord AND Others with all our soul).
- In Quadrant D write “Breaking of the Bread” (This reflects how one is to “Love the Lord and Others with all our body).
- In the cross section of the circle in capital letters write DEVOTED.
- You are free to color code your quadrants using your colored markers and/or pencils.
- Using your colored markers/pencils begin to write down words, or draw images, outside each quadrant of how you personally are devoting yourself to study, fellowship, worship/prayer and to service. Be open to whatever comes, do not be too literal. You can repeat activities if they apply to more than one category.
- Questions to ponder:
  - Is there one area with more focus than the others? Why? (The challenge is to be devoted, balanced and integrated fully. How might you focus on an area that is not equally as strong, or you are not engaging at this time?
  - Where would you place the Five Practices of Healthy Congregations? (Passionate Worship, Radical Hospitality, Intentional Faith Development, Risk Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity)?
  - Where do the membership vows go? (Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service, Witness)?
- Repeat the activity, but this time think of your local congregation or ministry site; how is the community of faith devoting themselves to a balanced Wesleyan Spirituality and Early Church example?

Finish by journaling any thoughts and reflections. Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

## **Sunday Sabbath**

**“Throughout the history of Methodism, the primary means by which we have brought people into this way of life has been through faith communities.”<sup>vi</sup> Robert Schnase**

### **The Spirit in Our Lives**

*As we read God’s Holy Word*

*We will listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit*

*As we live each day knowing it to be a gift from God*

*We will let the Spirit be seen in us.*

*As we talk with people in the course of our routines,*

*We will let the Spirit be heard in our voices.<sup>vii</sup>*

Finish by journaling any thoughts and reflections. Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

## Guided Prayer and Meditation

***“Imagine if God’s mission was our first priority.”<sup>xiii</sup> Robert Schnase***

***“I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.” Philemon 6***

Find a place where you can be in comfortable, uninterrupted, prayer. Take your journal and prayer guide with you. Feel free to take anything else you may need to help you relax in an attitude of prayer (i.e. cup of coffee or glass of water, headset, prayer cord from last week, etc.).

When you’ve settled in, simply sit comfortably for several minutes. Focus on your breathing, nothing else; breathe in and breathe out. Breathe in all that is of God; exhale all that is not of God. Breathe in all that is life giving; exhale all that is life taking (all that distracts or obstructs your ability to get close with God).

Visualize the most extravagant reunion or family gathering you’ve attended that made you feel unconditionally loved, welcome and at home. Take in all the sights, smells, sounds.

- What do you see?
- What do you smell?
- What sounds draw your attention?
- Whose voices do you hear?
- Who’s present at the gathering?
- Who’s missing from the gathering?
- What feelings rise to the surface as you remember and visualize yourself in this place, space and time?

Now visualize a place where you have felt the most present with God (real or hoped for). Take in all the sights, smells, sounds.

- What do you see?
- What do you smell?
- What sounds draw your attention?
- Whose voice do you hear?
- What is the voice saying?
- What do you feel at this moment?

Take in all the energy of this place, notice what's around you; who's with you? Absorb the sights, the sounds, the smells of this very sacred place. Stay here in prayer with the Divine for as long as you like.

When you're ready; give thanks to God for this time together. Give thanks for those spiritual mentors, teachers and community of faith, who have shared, and continue to share, a life in Christ with you. Lift each up by name with praise and thanksgiving.

Next visualize those who are missing from the community; those who are in need of Christ in their lives and those who you and your local church may reach out to in Christian love. Pray for the courage and authenticity to simply be present to them, to listen to their needs and only then, respond compassionately as led by the Spirit.

Finish by journaling any thoughts and reflections. Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

The way of community is about the inward journey, not the journey into me but the journey into we." Brian McLaren

## **WALKING PRAYER AND GUIDED REFLECTION**

***“Congregations offer the invitation and embrace of Christ.”<sup>x</sup> – Robert Schnase***

***“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12.1-2***

While speaking to a group of youth and youth leaders at WOW 2013 this past January in Springfield Missouri, someone asked, “Is there a right way to pray? Am I supposed to fold my hands and bow my head or is it okay to stand and lift up my hands?” The answer to that question is “both-and.” Both are appropriate postures of prayer, in fact there are other postures that express our devotion to and desire to be more deeply connected to the Almighty. Mercy sakes, why would God want it any differently? Postures often convey our attitudes and intentions. We kneel to express adoration and reverence. We sit to listen and mediate on God’s word. We stand in adoration and praise. Many persons clasp their hands, press a palm to their heart, even raise their palms to the sky. All are means by which we are able to embody prayer, thus allowing it to work from the inside out. Through the outward expression of prayer postures the “body, heart and soul experience better balance and coordination, as well as a tighter bonding and therefore more peaceful and satisfying movement toward God.”<sup>x</sup>

Today, you will engage a form of body prayer as a doxology following your prayer walk. Before beginning, sit down, read the quote and Bible passage provided above.

As you begin to walk (at any pace comfortable for you), do so with an attitude of opening yourself to God. Reflect upon the Bible passage and quote. How might they be inviting you into holy conversation and prayer today? As you walk around notice what is around you; people, houses, businesses, parks, etc. Pray for all these things and people as you walk by them.

When you return, practice the body prayer as described below:

### **PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW**

- Stand, feet together, arms hanging to your sides. Step to the right with your right foot so that your feet are shoulder width apart. At the same time raise your forearms, with palms up, to waist level as you begin the prayer.

### **IN THE NAME OF GOD, OUR CREATOR,**

- Brings palms together in prayer in front of your heart. Keeping your palms together, raise your arms above your head.

### JESUS, OUR REDEEMER,

- Lower your arms to shoulder level, stretching them wide with palms out, as in the form of a cross.

### AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR SUSTAINER.

- Keeping your arms outstretched, rotate your palms upward.

### AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, NOW AND EVER SHALL BE

- Step forward with your right foot while you bring your arms forward, still at shoulder level, palms outward, till thumbs and index finger connect, forming a triangle.

### WORLD WITHOUT END

- Circle your palms outward, down and up, making the form of a circle; like earth now resting in God's palms.

### AMEN

- Bring your right foot back, feet shoulder width apart as hands return to praying position in front of your heart.

### AMEN

- Bring your feet together, and drop arms/hands to your sides, bow slightly.

Take time to briefly journal your thoughts and feelings. How was it a prayerful way to “offer yourself as a living sacrifice?” How was it helpful to focus your intentions upon being the invitation and embrace of Christ to others? In general, how did praying in this form help or hinder you?

Make a list of persons, businesses, houses, etc., you prayed for as you walked.

1. How might you act upon one or two of these in the next several days?
2. Might one of them be an act of service this week?

Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

## **DAY OF FASTING**

***“What if we really allowed this priority on Christ’s mission through congregations to direct us in our alignment of resources, personnel, and energy in every district, conference and general agency of the church?”<sup>xii</sup> Robert Schnase***

***“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ‘Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.’”***

***Psalm 46.1-3,5,9-10.***

One of the reasons given for fasting in the Judeo tradition is to prepare oneself to serve and/or complete a mission of faithful service.<sup>xii</sup> In this manner, to fast becomes more of a means of cleansing and readiness, than self-denial. Through the Bible there are several examples of communities and individuals participating in this type of “normal fast” include Moses (Ex. 24 & 34), Elijah (1 Kings 19), Jesus (Matthew 4), and the Early Church (Acts 13 and 14).<sup>xiii</sup> When done with these intentions of cleansing and preparation the fast is both an individual and communal act of piety and mercy.

Today’s fast is a normal fast of cleansing and readiness – preparing for what God has already prepared for you. The challenge to ministry is always getting ourselves and all our well-intended, brilliant ideas, out of the way, so God’s eternal good and ever-present will may come to fruition. To get outside of ourselves means to listen, yes with our ears, but it’s more than that. We listen with our full selves, attentively paying attention to being still and real with God.

- Following the same practice as last week, begin the morning (before sunrise) with a balanced, light breakfast. Read the Bible passage and quote. Then in an attitude of prayer, lay the following questions before God. Pause, stop talking, be still and just listen.
  - What Lord, are you preparing us for? What Lord, have you prepared for us?
  - How Lord, are you calling us to allow Christ’s mission to become first and foremost?
  - How are you reconfiguring our ministry in ways that align our resources, personnel, efforts, energy, focus, all in all, with Christ’s mission?

- For the remainder of the day continue your fast. Be sure to pay attention to the rules of fasting (in index).<sup>xiv</sup>
- As you go throughout the day, be in an attitude of attentive listening for answers to the questions you've laid before God. Pay attention to conversations, to the news, business or ministry spread sheets, Treasurer Reports, emails, body language, scripture, etc. Hold these words in holy conversation.
- As you feel waves of hunger come throughout the day, remember the words of the Psalmist. As a way of focusing your intentions, use the following method of praying Psalm 46. You can modify the prayer and use your prayer cord from last week.

- Be
- Be still
- Be still and
- Be still and know
- Be still and know I
- Be still and know I am
- Be still and know I am God
- Pause
- Be still and know I am God
- Be still and know I am
- Be still and know I
- Be still and know
- Be still and
- Be still
- Be
- Pause ... Amen

- Breaking Fast: At sundown, partake in a small, well-balanced dinner. Say grace before taking your first bite.

Finish by journaling any thoughts and reflections. How is God reconfiguring you and your church's (or ministry site's) resources, personnel and energy for the mission of Christ?

Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

## **A DAY OF SERVICE**

***“Congregations are a primary means by which God reaches into our lives to work on our behalf to create us anew, to claim us as God’s own and to call us to God’s service.”<sup>xv</sup>***

***Robert Schnase***

***“If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. “Philippians 2.1-4a***

In taking the “form of a slave” to serve other’s interests, rather than his own, Christ “emptied himself of all but love.”<sup>xvi</sup> This is the sacrificial love of God of which we, as the Body of Believers, are to exemplify. It is a love experienced through the justifying grace of God and perfected through the sanctifying grace of God. The Great Commandment to love God and others, when obeyed, sanctifies and makes us whole. As the Body of Christ we live together, being of one mind and imitating Christ; serving others for the missional purpose of Christ.

Based upon your prayers and the focus of this week, be attentive to another’s need. Plan to take intentional time this week to do an act of service for another.

- At the end of the day take time to journal your experience.
- What did you do?
- How was it received?
- What were your initial feelings about doing this act?
- How did you feel afterward?
- Where was God while you were working?
- How was it an act of prayer for you?

Finish by journaling any thoughts and reflections. Close with the daily prayer. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Robert Schnase, *Remember the Future; Praying for the Church and Change* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 93.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-93.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>iv</sup> Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *John Wesley’s Message Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 82.

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<sup>v</sup> Ibid., 82. Mack B. Stokes served as a Bishop of the United Methodist Church for the Mississippi Conference, taught Systems Theology at Emory College for 31 years. Bishop Stokes passed away in November of 2012.

<sup>vi</sup> Schnase, *Remember the Future*, 89.

<sup>vii</sup> J. Thomas McAfee, Project Chair, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal (Macon: Celebrating Grace Inc., 2010)*, 237.

<sup>viii</sup> Schnase, *Remember the Future*, 91.

The quote cited by Brian McLaren is from his book, *Finding Our Way Again (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008)*, 99.

<sup>ix</sup> Schnase, *Remember the Future*, 89.

<sup>x</sup> Roy DeLeon, ObISB, *Praying With The Body; Bringing the Psalms To Life (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2009)*, xv.

<sup>xi</sup> Schnase, *Remember the Future*, 91.

<sup>xii</sup> Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005)*, 76.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiv</sup> Rules for fasting include: 1. If sick, traveling or under unusual stress do not practice the fast. 2. While fasting, drink plenty of water. 3. Fasting will affect your energy level so plan accordingly and reduce your normal activity for the day.

<sup>xv</sup> Schnase, *Remember the Future*, 90.

<sup>xvi</sup> See Philippians 2.4b-7