



PRAYING OUR WAY FORWARD



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Daily Prayer/Devotion Guide

Thank you for participating in Praying Our Way Forward with the Central Texas Conference. In this time of prayer, we turn our attention toward God that we might grow in awareness of the gifts of the Spirit and offer these gifts to the world.

This is a time when you may offer your prayers for the mission of the United Methodist Church and for the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.

We join our United Methodist sisters and brothers across the globe in praying for and with one another that we might live into our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Offer this as a time to speak to God and listen for God's voice.

JANUARY 28TH

Today's scripture reading is from the gospel of Matthew chapter 28 verses 16 through 20. In this text, Jesus shares with the Disciples a clear mission. Above all else, Christ calls the church to go into the world and make disciples of all people.

As you read, what word or phrase speaks to your heart and mind the most clearly?

How do you experience this call to mission in your own life?

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

After reading the text, consider:

- Is there someone God might be putting in your path today with whom you can share the Good News of Christ's love?
- What might it be like if every United Methodist Christian worked daily to make disciples of Jesus Christ?

JANUARY 29TH

Today's scripture reading comes from the gospel of John chapter 13 verses 31 through 35.

In this text, Jesus teaches the Disciples how to avoid an identity crisis. As you read the scripture, what word or phrase speaks to your heart and mind the most clearly?

What do you hear about love in these verses?

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

After reading the text, consider:

- How have you experienced the love of God today?
- According to Christ, the distinguishing mark of his disciples is the love and care they demonstrate to each other. With whom will you share Christ's love today?
- How is God calling you to expand the circle of people with whom you share the love of Christ?

JANUARY 30TH

Today's scripture reading comes from the book Ecclesiastes chapter 5 verses 1-2. As you read, what word or phrase speaks to your heart and mind the most clearly?

¹ Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than the sacrifice offered by fools; for they do not know how to keep from doing evil. ² Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you upon earth; therefore, let your words be few."

These verses from Ecclesiastes teach us that listening demonstrates caring. It is important for Christ's followers to listen to God and to one another.

After reading the text, consider:

- What do you hear God speaking to you?
- How can you open your heart and mind to listen to those who are different from you?

JANUARY 31st

Today's scripture reading comes from the gospel of Matthew chapter 8 verses 23-27. As you read, what word or phrase speaks to your heart and mind the most clearly?

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷ They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him?"

Jesus often asked his disciples "Why are you so fearful." It's a question he also asks us. Read the passage one more time. As you do, consider:

- Where do you experience fear in the church? Share those fears and experiences with God.
- How will you be a voice of peace, calm, and confidence in the face of fear?

Pray for God to calm the fears of the Church and in our world.

FEBRUARY 1st

Today's scripture reading comes from Paul's letter to the Corinthians chapter 15 verses 50-58. As you read, what word or phrase speaks to your heart and mind the most clearly?

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Scripture promises us that the work we do for Christ will not be for nothing. It is not—and never has been—in vain.

Read Paul's words again, consider what it could look like for the UMC to remain faithful to Christ in this time of challenge.

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Now, consider:

- What does it look like for you to be faithful to the work of Christ in your own daily living?
- How does your faithfulness connect with the mission and ministries of the Church?

FEBRUARY 2nd

Today's scripture reading comes from the gospel of Mark chapter 14 verses 32-36. As you read, hear what it might mean for us to surrender ourselves to the will of God.

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴ And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Through this prayer, Jesus commits his whole being to God. How serious are we when we pray "thy will be done?" Reading the text again, consider the seriousness of Christ's own prayer:

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And now, where might the will of God lead you today?

FEBRUARY 3rd

Today's scripture reading comes from Paul's letter to the Colossians chapter 3 verses 12-17.

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul helps us understand how to live a life pleasing to God.

According to this instruction, how we can honor and glorify Christ during this current moment in the life of the United Methodist Church.

Since we belong to God and not ourselves, we make it our goal to live in ways that please and honor Christ. What will you do today to please and honor the risen Christ?

May the Spirit of Christ fill us so that through the work of the Commission on ~~the~~ A Way forward, we might please the Lord.