



PRAYING OUR WAY FORWARD



PRAYER VIGIL: 1-hour Prayer Experience

*Praying for the 2019 General Conference, the Commission on the Way Forward,
the Elected Delegates, our Church and our World.*

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

It will be helpful to have a Bible, a cross, the United Methodist logo with the cross and flame, a globe or world map, paper and pens or pencils for writing, a candle, and a means to light the candle. You will also need a list of the commission members, and one of the elected delegates and alternates from your Annual Conference.

When you are ready to begin, we encourage you to use these words or others of your own choosing:

- We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
- We place this cross to remind us that we serve a risen Lord who is the head of the church.
- We place The United Methodist cross and flame to remind us that we were formed in 1969 from the union of two expressions of the Church universal, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church (the two flames by the one cross).

OPENING SCRIPTURE

[When you are ready, please read the following passage from the Gospel of John, Chapter 1:1--5 (the Common English Bible translation is printed below).]

In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

2 The Word was with God in the beginning.

3 Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word
nothing came into being.

What came into being

4 through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

Prayerfully reflect on this truth, that the Word—Jesus Christ—was with God and was God from the very beginning. Everything that “came into being” did so because the Word—Jesus—was involved in the

creation of all things—all people—all planets—all solar systems—everything! We are one in Christ by creation and by redemption. Through our profession of faith in Christ and baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we are spiritually connected to one another through the Word. The Word was life, and the life was the light for all people.

What prayers, songs, feelings, or images come to you now as you reflect on Jesus Christ as the creator, light and life of all people?

[Pause here for two to five minutes. This will allow time to center our selves in Christ. Use this time to pray, sing, or draw, etc.]

Now, offer a prayer for yourself and for all your siblings in The United Methodist Church who have responded to the call to Christian discipleship. Open yourself to this holy mystery of our oneness in Jesus Christ. Meditate on the spiritual reality that we are family. Pray that this deep and essential truth will undergird and guide all of the preparation and planning for the 2019 General Conference, including the work of the Commission on the Way Forward and the Council of Bishops, all the interactions during the General Conference and the commitments made at the General Conference.

[Pause three to five minutes for prayer, reflection, and writing, etc.]

When you are ready, read this verse from John 1:14 CEB.

The Word became flesh
and made his home among us.
We have seen his glory,
glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Let the Holy Spirit help us consider anew the mystery of the incarnation, the cosmic Christ who was involved in all creation, now comes to us as a baby—so vulnerable—so powerful—so unique. Consider Charles Wesley's poetic reflection on the mystery of how the unique Word of God became flesh, "God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man."

What prayer or thought comes to you now as you consider the mystery of the incarnation— God with us—the Word become flesh?

[Pause to reflect and pray. Feel free to write or draw. If there is a group, invite people to briefly tell about the thoughts and prayers that come to them today.]

When you are ready, consider the character and content of the living Word of God who "became flesh and made his home among us...full of grace and truth." As you consider the essential nature of Jesus Christ—full of love, grace, and truth—what prayer, song, feelings, and pictures come to you now?

[Pause for two to five minutes to write or draw or pray the thoughts and feelings that come to you.]

PRAY FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Now go to "United Methodists: A Connected Church" graphic included at the end of this packet, study the picture and read the text. Consider the awesome responsibility of these 864 United Methodists from around the world, as they prepare to meet in St. Louis, Missouri in February of 2019.

Pray for this assembly, its member and its leaders, as the Holy Spirit leads you to pray.

[Pause for a few minutes to pray, reflect, write or draw.]

PRAY FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ON THE WAY FORWARD, FOR DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Pray for the members of the Commission on the Way Forward as they continue their work. Pray that God will be with them as they build relationships with each other, and as they converse with others who will inform their deliberations.

Also, pray for the lay and clergy delegates in your annual conference. If you wish, you can also pray for the delegates and alternates from your Jurisdiction or any of the other areas of the world.

Pray for everyone as the Holy Spirit leads you to pray.

PRAY FOR THE WORLD

The Church of Jesus Christ is a missionary church—engaged in God’s mission to seek and save the lost, the least and the lonely. If you have a globe or world map, prayerfully gaze at the world, imagine the seven billion people on it, and pray the prayer that God places on your heart.

Pray that God’s mission—to seek and to save the lost—will be the top priority of all Christians, in all churches, including The United Methodist Church around the world.

[Pause for a few minutes to pray, reflect, write, or draw. Be attentive and receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Are there particular people or places or situations in the world that you feel led to pray for now?]

THANKSGIVING

As you close your hour of prayer. Give thanks to God for the gift of Jesus Christ—the Word of God made flesh—full of grace and truth. Give thanks to the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, who sent the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us—teaching us everything that Jesus taught the first disciples.

If you feel led, you might want to conclude this hour with The Lord’s Prayer.

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UNITED METHODISTS: A Connected Church



OUR ORGANIZATION

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church is designed with checks and balances built into the structure to prevent any one branch from taking too much authority over the whole body.