



## *Praying Our Way Forward*

For nearly a year now, week by week, one of our United Methodist Annual Conferences has focused its prayer energy on Praying Our Way Forward. Each Annual Conference was assigned a week to focus in this way. The week for West Ohio to lead the way in prayer, especially in light of the work of the Commission On A Way Forward and the called session of the General Conference, is January 7-13, 2018.

So on Sunday January 7, we will dig in as a conference and breathe together for a week of praying that God will shine a light on the way forward for The United Methodist Church to embrace unity and the enormous mission that God has asked us to share in.

We all have different rhythms and practices in prayer. However I am asking that to the extent possible we devote 12:00 Noon – 12:15 PM for Praying Our Way Forward. Please know that you are invited to pray whenever you can and as much as you can each day the week of January 7-13, 2018. To this end, on January 3, you will be provided through multiple mediums, a prayer for the week and a prayer for each day that offers a specific focus. You will also be able to post your own prayers on the Prayer Wall on the conference website.

Thank you in advance for joining this holy conspiracy. As always I am,

Your servant in Christ Jesus,

*+ Bishop Gregory V. Palmer*

### ***For the Unity of The United Methodist Church:***

Healing God, We believe that in Christ Jesus, you have and still are tearing down the dividing walls of our hostility. Look upon your church called United Methodist with mercy, compassion and forgiveness. You alone are our peace and our hope. Make us one in glorifying you, in proclaiming your name throughout the cosmos and in extending your mission of new creation everywhere. Amen.



***For the Week:***

Revealing God, as the Star of Bethlehem guided the wise of long ago to the light of the world, Jesus Christ, so guide your church in this season by the light of your love to glorify you, engage the mission and serve our neighbors. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***For the members of the Commission On A Way Forward:***

Gracious God, We give you thanks for these thy servants who seek to serve us all through this labor of study, prayer, discernment and design. Help them one and all to see each other, the church and the world you love so much. Give them patience, wisdom, insight and creativity to see what has not yet been. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

***For the Bishops of the Church:***

O God, Bishop of our souls, we pray today for the bishops of The United Methodist Church. They are charged to lead, model and serve. Give them each and all the heart of a shepherd, the courage of a prophet and the zeal of an evangelist. Strengthen their arms that they might hold the whole, and so equip your church to “serve the present age.” Amen.

***For General Conference Delegates:***

Holy triune God, Your very nature is connection, communion and mission. Guide and strengthen the delegates to the 2019 General Conference to become an incarnate sign of your nature and so model it before the whole Church. Strengthen them in body, mind and spirit for the work that lies ahead. Quicken all of their sensibilities. Amen.

***For the Mission of the Church:***

Missionary God, You relentlessly pursue us for relationship. You unceasingly love us. Send us with faith, courage and compassion into the world as both sign and invitation of the transforming relationship available to all through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***For the Unity of the Church:***

Gift giving God, Open us to receive, relish and luxuriate in the gift of unity. We confess that we have not always been thankful recipients of your generosity. Deliver us from our sectarian ways born in idolatry and nurtured in hubris. Generate in us a yearning to live Your Oneness, that we be one, so that the world might believe. We pray in the name of our savior Jesus, who was and is one with you. Amen.



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