



Be still AND KNOW
THAT I am God
PSALM 46:10

Prayer Vigil Devotional
Guide for the
United Methodist Church
General Conference 2024

April 23 - May 3, 2024

*Produced by Union United Methodist
Church*

Dear Union UMC Family,

We invite you to join us on a road to prayerfully support the work of our denomination as we align our plans with God's Word. There are decisions to be made. It won't be easy.

General Conference will be in session April 23rd through May 3rd, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily. We have some from Union who have committed to praying during this time. Know that you are welcome to join in, anytime, anywhere, as you would like.

You may also use this opportunity to discern other decisions, choices, paths and struggles happening with you right now. We look forward to how God will guide us and how He will change each of us for His glory in the process.

Thank you for praying!
Clergy, Staff, Members and All Others

*This is what the Lord says:
"Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls."
- Jeremiah 6:16*

Ways to Engage

- Set aside a particular time each day to read the devotional and pray for General Conference.
- Pray the clock with us as you read through the booklet. This is where day 1 will start at 8 a.m., day 2 would be at 9 a.m., and so on so by the end of the 11 days, we have covered 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. in prayer. There will be timing prompts on each page, if you're interested in trying this technique.
- Sign up for a prayer vigil time slot. Since General Conference meets for 11 days from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. each day, we have set up a sign-up board in the narthex where you can sign up and commit to praying for General Conference during a specified time. There are 44 time slots and more than one person can sign up for a time slot.
 - Set aside time to be at Union in prayer for General Conference. We have set aside space in the library, LL 13, for prayer.
 - Set aside this time slot during your day to pray for General Conference.
- Follow our social media pages and keep an eye out for our posts praying for General Conference and share it! The more people praying for General Conference, their discernment and wisdom, the better!
- Check out our website, where we will have a link to an online version of the prayer booklet in case you left yours at home or would prefer an online copy. You can read it there or download your own copy.

DID YOU KNOW???

- The General Conference (GC) is the only body within the United Methodist Church that sets policy – our legislative body.
- Normally the GC meets every 4 years, but due to Covid it's been 8 years now.
- Results of the GC will affect millions of United Methodists and how they do church for years to come.
- The GC is a gathering of delegates from 4 continents.
- There are 862 planned voting delegates, ½ clergy, ½ laity.
- The voting is 56% USA, 32% Africa, 6% Philippines, 6% Europe.
- There are 14 legislative committees; and, one standing committee representing Africa, Europe and the Philippines.
- Petitions approved by committee are sent to the full body for vote. Simple majority is required except for constitutional changes which require a ⅔ vote.
- Delegates vote based on their own conscience as moved by the Holy Spirit.
- Final results are included in the UMC Book of Discipline 2024.
- The UMC has never altered our doctrinal standards, and none are expected this year.
- Bishops preside at GC, but do not vote.
- SC Bishop L Jonathon Holston will deliver the episcopal address.
- GC opens and closes with worship. Each day opens with worship.
- The US has 53 Annual Conferences. There are 80 outside the US.
- About one-quarter of UM churches have disaffiliated in the US between 2019-2023.
- There are no voting delegates or clergy from Union UMC this conference.

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 8 a.m. hour.

**Prayer Focus: Today we pray for all in attendance at
General Conference.**

**Many of us shoulder much responsibility, but that
being borne by our delegates, bishops, clergy, and
laity during this conference will impact us all.
Some responsibility weighs more than others...**

*“Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my
disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross
daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life
will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”*

- Luke 9: 23-24

Prayer:

Father God, denying ourselves is easy to say but difficult to do. That means we have to let go of our thoughts, our feelings, what we want. It is so difficult to let go of what is familiar and comfortable. We pray that those at General Conference may heed your voice. Give them strength to see that where you take us may be difficult. Help all those at conference to have ears to hear and a heart yielded to you. It is only through your grace and power that they will be able to do this. Thank you for your presence and your Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 9 a.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for the bishops who oversee geographical flocks of churches. In particular, we pray for Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, our South Carolina bishop. May the Council of Bishops provide Godly leadership during this conference.

Bishop Holston continues to implore South Carolina United Methodists to remain patient and focused on what should be the top priority of every local church – our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."

- Ephesians 1: 17-18

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, just as Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus, we pray this prayer for our bishops. Please give them spiritual wisdom, insight and discernment to grow in the knowledge of you. We so want their hearts to be flooded with your light that they might be your holy presence in this conference. Through the power of your Holy Spirit and in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Thursday, April 25, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 10 a.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for local church clergy, especially Rev. Stephen Taylor, Rev. Faye Jones and Rev. David Anderson of Union.

The role of clergy is to primarily proclaim God's word and be the spiritual leadership of the church. We recognize that denominational and administrative demands add much to their days. We pray that General Conference will be encouraging and uplifting to our local clergy.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

- 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18

Prayer:

Father God, we worship you, the one True God. We are grateful for the freedom to worship you in our great land. We are grateful for the strength and availability of our churches. We are grateful for the pastors you have called, and who responded, to serve our wonderful churches. Bless all in church leadership as we travel this road of General Conference. Give us all your will, and grant us your Holy Spirit. When days are difficult, we seek your face, your guidance and your grace. May your richest blessings strengthen the local churches. In the name of Christ, the head of the universal church, Amen.

Friday, April 26, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 11 a.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we lift in prayer all United Methodist pastors who are not serving a local church, but serving as chaplains, missionaries, counselors, and leaders in our international denomination.

Our global presence sets United Methodists apart from many other protestant churches. We truly believe that “for God so loved the world” that people of all races and nations are under His loving care. Today at General Conference, much of the discussion will be undergirded by clergy and staff not serving the local church.

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

- Hebrews 4: 12-13

Prayer:

God of the Universe, you made us and know exactly who we are, inside and out. Nothing about us is hidden from you. You know where we struggle, when we fall, and when we are able to stand in the power of your Spirit. The knowledge that we are accountable to you for our words, actions and intentions of our hearts is terrifying. Thank you for providing your Son Jesus to give us grace and mercy. Since we are accountable to you, Lord, help us to make the decisions you want made in this time of conferencing. In the name of the One who knows us best. Amen.

Saturday, April 27, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 12 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray specifically for our official church delegates who represent your United Methodist churches asking that they feel your presence as you lead them to a closer walk with Thee.

“God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

- 1 Corinthians 1: 9-10

Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit and guide the voting delegates during this conference. Give them wisdom and discernment each day as they work for your will to be done. In the name of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and my Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 28, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 1 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for all the alternate delegates, those involved in every discussion and decision up to voting, who are prepared to step in when needed. They, too, have heeded the call to serve at General Conference.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes.”

- Proverbs 3: 5-7a

Prayer:

Lord, forgive our foolish pride in thinking we know what is right and wrong, what is best. It is so easy for us to be persuaded by loud voices and shiny soapboxes. You alone see the whole picture, the big picture for years to come. Help us to humbly seek your guidance. We need your Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and words. Help us trust in you alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, April 29, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 2 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for all who are voting, both clergy and laity. Much work will be done in committee. That which is supported by the committees will be sent to the Conference for action. All who vote are left to their own conscience as fueled by the Holy Spirit.

“And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn hearts and give them tender, responsive hearts, so they will obey my decrees and regulations. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God.”

- Ezekiel 11: 19-20

Prayer:

Lord, grant us the tender, responsive hearts you talk about rather than our stony, stubborn ones which insist on our own ways. We often resist you and sometimes don't want to hear what you have to say. Jesus, please forgive us. By your Holy Spirit, give us this singleness of heart which wants to obey you and do your will. We want to be yours forever and ever. Jesus, we praise your name! Amen.

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 3 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for all those in attendance at General Conference without input or voting rights.

We expect there to be many observers, especially from the Carolinas, since the Conference is in Charlotte. Seeing the administrative, legislative and executive parts of the United Methodist Church is a rare event for most.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

- Colossians 2: 6-7

Prayer:

Jesus, we thank you for being with us on this journey, shaping us into your image. We want to be vessels fashioned for your purpose so we might one day hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That is the desire of our hearts. Please reveal more and more of who you are to us, so we can be rooted in your love and stand firm on your foundation. Through your Holy Spirit make us strong in faith, able to stand and proclaim how wonderful you are. We have so much to be thankful for! In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 4 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we are praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Methodist churches of Africa, Europe and the Philippines, who are at General Conference and voting on all the same resolutions as the US church.

Since customs and cultures vary across national boundaries, there will be unexpected tensions on our churches from abroad. The outcome of the conference will impact our sister church in Chitenderano where our team of volunteers helped finish their sanctuary this year, and where Union sent a video greeting for their Easter service.

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

- Psalm 139: 23-24

Prayer:

Father God, you know our every thought even before we think them. You know us better than we know ourselves! You know we have anxious thoughts about our churches. Please reveal our anxious thoughts to us so that we might actively strive to continue to rely on you and your strength. We trust you to lead us forward. Please look on us and our churches with mercy and grace. We pray that you would lead us on the path which leads to everlasting life with you. It's in the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

Thursday, May 2, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 5 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for all United Methodists affected by the results of General Conference.

As of 2022, there are 29,746 active churches in the US with 5.5 million members. Our average worship attendance is 3,141,000. Outside the US in Africa, Europe and the Philippines, there are 4.5 million members worshipping in approximately 10,000 churches. Our global presence is roughly 13 million members in 130 countries supported by 43,500 churches. Many people will be impacted!

“Show me your ways, Lord. Teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”
- Psalm 25: 4-5

Prayer:

Lord God, you are our only hope in navigating this world. Left to ourselves, we would wander about trying to find the right road that leads to you. Thank you for your guidance and instruction through your word. Help us to pay attention and hear your Spirit’s voice so we might know the right path. We put our hope in you and trust you to continue to lead our churches. Thank you for your presence. In the name of the One who is in control. Amen.

Friday, May 3, 2024

For those praying the clock, this is the 6 p.m. hour.

Prayer Focus: Today we pray for each and every local church – our pastors, staff, members and guests.

Like driving a car, we can only see a small part of the road ahead, but we have faith we will reach our destination. Similarly, we trust God to see His church on the right path forward until He brings us HOME.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

- Matthew 7: 13-14

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you call your people out of the crowd and direct us to the narrow path. It is hard to choose that narrow path when the wide path is so familiar. You care about all paths and all of those who are on them, but you have taught us to rely on your Spirit as we seek to recognize the narrow path and muster up courage to walk it every day. Thank you for caring for each of us, no matter where we are. In the name of Christ who can keep us from failing. Amen.

*Thank you for joining us
in praying for the General
Conference of the United
Methodist Church!*



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