



## Prayers of Protection for the Work of the Commission on a Way Forward: February 18–24, 2018

Differences in understanding of how God is calling United Methodists to faithfully live together culminated at General Conference 2016 with the authorization of a Commission on a Way Forward. That commission continues to work preparing its recommendations to the Council of Bishops. The final proposals to the Special General Conference in February, 2019 will result in new directions for the church. You are invited to participate in this supportive prayer movement, a response to the Bishops initiative called Praying Our Way Forward. We are called to pray for God's leadership to guide us effectively in fulfilling the mission of the church. Laity and clergy across the denomination are invited to pray for God's guidance. If there is ever a place where we can be one, it's in the space where we meet God. General Conference delegates and reserves from Wisconsin offer these prayers for your use.

### **February 18, 2018** — *For Protection of the Integrity of the Process*

Everlasting God, we pray that your Spirit's power permeates The United Methodist Church as new possibilities are considered by those designated to discern our way into the future. Protect us from the mentality of presuming our perspective is superior when other members of your church experience your presence and message differently than we do. Open us to a creative outcome from our current struggles, one which surrounds all with your protection. Help us to recognize your love expressed through leaders and followers, the vulnerable as well as the powerful, the quiet as well as the noisy. May we feel your protective presence with us as we walk alongside the diversity of believers who make up Christ's body. Guide us into your future with grace. Amen.

*(Steve Zekoff)*

### **February 19, 2018** — *For Protection of the Members of the Commission*

Lord, we pray for protection of our communities of faith, including the Commission on a Way Forward. We pray that each member may be filled with grace, continue as a witness to our communities, and be in mission throughout the world. Lord, we are bombarded by so many things, in our lives and in our world, help us to continue to focus on you and how we can glorify you in all we do. May we be united in the values that your son Jesus taught us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*(Katie Crise)*



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*(Katie Crise)*

**February 20, 2018** — *For Protection of Our Bishops and Leaders*

Wise, Generous, and Merciful God: how your heart must ache with frustration and disappointment. You have a vision for your United Methodist Church. Protect that vision in spite of us. Break through our impasse and lead us forward. Protect the members of the Commission from barbs of criticism and rejection by those who disagree with their recommendations. As the bishops consider next steps, protect them, not only from physical attacks or threats, but also from themselves. Release them from doubt and uncertainty. Give them clarity in understanding your will for your church. Give them courage as they craft a recommendation for consideration at the Interim General Conference. Show them how to lead us into a future that is full of hope and promise, the future you have planned for us. Compassionate and Forgiving God, we are wandering in the wilderness. We turn to you; rescue us. With gratitude, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. *(Judy Vasby)*

**February 21, 2018** — *For Protection of the Unity of The UMC*

God of peace and unity, we come humbly and gratefully into your presence. We come to you with minds full of concerns and hands full of needs, but also hearts seeking to be sustained as a church by the peace of your presence. Help us, O God, to clear our cluttered thoughts and to rediscover the truth of your peace that is deep and life-giving. Loving God, help us to remember that Christ came as our peace, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility. Guide us, God, to follow in the steady footsteps of Christ and help us to work together to be witnesses of your love in this world and in our denomination of many diverse people. We continue our prayers for our United Methodist Church and the Commission on a Way Forward. Thank you for each one who loves you and loves the church with faithfulness and willingness to share and show your love for all people. We pray in the name and Spirit of Jesus the Christ. Amen. *(Jenny Arneson)*

**February 22, 2018** — *For Protection of the Core Tenets of United Methodism*

Generous and grace-filled God, help us remember who we are. As United Methodists, make us agents of your grace and giving. Remind us that the whole world is our parish. Everywhere we go we are in a mission field, ripe for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and witnessing to mercy, justice, peace, and compassion. As faithful stewards of the many gifts of your Holy Spirit, may we remember to "Do all the good we can, By all the means we can, In all the ways we can, In all the places we can, At all the times we can, To all the people we can, As long as ever we can." We ask this humbly in your Holy Name. Amen. *(Dan Dick)*

**February 23, 2018** — *For Protection of Vulnerable Constituencies*

Gracious and Loving God, we marvel at your loving care for all people. As the Commission on a Way Forward continues its work, open us to grace, so that we may see your light shining through one another, regardless of our theological perspectives or stand on a particular issue. We beseech your protection and comfort, Lord, for all who feel threatened or violated or isolated. Help us to stand up with those whose voices are not heard, to listen and speak your truth with respect and humility. We offer this prayer in the love of Christ our Lord and in the power of your Holy Spirit, which we all share. Amen. *(Barbara Dick)*

**February 24, 2018** — *For Protection of the Members of the Commission*

Holiest One, blaze the way and make your path clear with signposts and ebenezers and burning bushes and heart tugs, if you will. Keep the members of the Commission on your path and protect them fiercely. You have entrusted them with this work, and we pray that you will be there to rescue any straying or injured soul that needs you. Love them as only you can. Amen. *(Jennifer Southworth)*

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