

# 2016 General Conference Prayer Guide

The Spiritual Formation Resource Team invites all Wisconsin United Methodists to a year of prayer for and about the work of our General Church. General Conference will meet May 10–20, 2016 in Portland, Oregon. The North Central Jurisdictional Conference will meet July 13–16, 2016 in Peoria, Illinois, where they will elect four new bishops for our jurisdiction.

## *A Prayer for Every Month*

### **Throughout the Year: Pray for Unity**

Prayer: O God whose Son prayed that his disciples would be one, we pray for the unity of The United Methodist Church. Protect us in your name, and protect us from the evil one, that we may abide in you, the Eternal One, and you in us. Amen.

*Scripture Text: John 17:20-21— "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

### **January: Pray for Understanding**

Prayer: *Come to me for understanding*, since I know you far better than you know yourself. I comprehend you in all your complexity; *no detail of your life is hidden from Me*. I view you through eyes of grace, so don't be afraid of My intimate awareness. Allow the Light of My healing Presence to shine into the deepest recesses of your being—cleansing, healing, refreshing, and renewing you. Trust Me enough to accept the full forgiveness that I offer you continually. This great gift, which cost Me My Life, is yours for all eternity. Forgiveness is at the very core of My abiding Presence.

*Scripture Text: Joshua 1:5—No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.*

### **February: Pray for Peace**

Prayer: God of Peace, You are our quiet center, the wellspring of deep peace. Guide us to new awareness of those places where we can work to bring peace for all. Amen

*Scripture Text: Colossians 3:15—And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.*

### **March: Pray for Gentleness and Humility**

Prayer: Lord, help us to reject the "wisdom" of the world and to depend completely on you. Equip us to take on your easy yoke, and make us gentle and humble in heart. Amen.

*Scripture Text: Matthew 11:28-30— "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

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## April: Pray for Patience in Preparation

Prayer: Dear Lord, guide us as we prepare for a new season in the life of our conference and our church. Strengthen our faith and grant us the patience to wait upon your reveal. Amen.

*Scripture Text: Colossians 3:12-13 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

## May: Pray for Our Delegation

Prayer: *Learn to laugh* at yourself. Don't take yourself or your circumstances too seriously. Relax and know that I am *God with you*. When you desire My will above all else, life becomes much less threatening. Stop trying to monitor My responsibilities; things that are beyond your control. Find freedom by accepting the boundaries of your domain. Do not miss the Joy of My Presence by carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders.

*Scripture Text: Matthew 11:28-30—"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

## June: Pray for Wisdom

Prayer: Lord, lead us into your deep wisdom. Open our souls to the wonder of your creation. Awaken us to the radiance of your presence, that light may dwell in us and guide us in the working of your Word.

*Scripture Text: Job 42:3, 5—"Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. . . . I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you"*

## July: Pray for Discernment

Prayer: Open our eyes and our hearts to be able to discern your loving will together. May your love be the root of all that we do and decide. Amen.

*Scripture Text: Philippians 1:8-11—"For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God."*

## August: Pray for Joy

Prayer: We sing hallelujah, Lord, and praises to your name in guiding our work and our leaders! Let us celebrate all they have accomplished for your church, all the hard decisions they have made through prayer and dedication. Amen.

*Scripture Text: Romans 15:5-6, 13—"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ."*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*



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## September: Pray for Patience in Transition

Prayer: Dear Lord, we stand in awe of the beauty you present us in the changing of the seasons. Help us to recognize that change strengthens our resilience to go out into the world and do your work. Grant us patience and fortitude to withstand the unknown, inspiration to look to the future, and faith to rest assured in your word.

*Scripture Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8—For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*

*a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace*

## October: Pray for Rest

Prayer: Gracious God, let us come to rest in the strength of your Spirit. Release us from confusion and stress. Bring us together in the tender presence of your mercy, grounded and restored in your everlasting love.

*Scripture Text: Zechariah 4:6—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD.”  
Psalm 46:10—“Be still, and know that I am God!”*

## November: Pray for Hope

Prayer: God of Living Hope, be with us in our waiting and searching. Fill us with your Spirit so that we may live all of our days walking into the light of your hope. Amen

*Scripture Text: Romans 5:5—And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

## December: Pray for the Future

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, walk with us into the future of your church. Help us to be as one with one another even as we strive to be one with you. Amen.

*Scripture Text: Jeremiah 29:11— For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

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## Pray in Many Ways

### **Publish, Project, or Post Prayers**

Publish the monthly prayers and Bible verses in your newsletter, on your video welcome screens, in your bulletins. Post them on bulletin boards. Pray the prayer together in worship, and invite the congregation to pray the prayer throughout the month.

### **Plant a Unity Tree**

Invite Sunday school classes or other groups to plant a tree dedicated to the unity of Christ's church.

### **Walking Prayer**

Recite the prayer for the month while walking, taking note of the ways God blesses us through creation.

### **Post-It Prayer**

Provide a vertical surface, (a metal fireplace screen, or a bulletin board or wall) and pads of sticky-notes or paper. Provide a means of posting the prayers to the wall: small magnets, push pins, the sticky-notes themselves. Invite the congregation to post prayers based on each monthly theme.

### **Brushstroke Prayer**

Provide large and small paintbrushes in water and a "Mini Buddha Board," widely available in stores and online. Invite the congregation to express their response to each monthly prayer as an offering to God.

### **Magnetic Prayer**

Provide a metal surface, such as a fireplace screen, and collections of magnetic words. These are easily available in collections based on music, nature, poetry, faith, and other topics. Post the monthly prayer and invite the congregation to post prayers and responses on the theme.

### **Ribbon Prayer**

Provide a metal surface, such as a fireplace screen, or a wall strung with magnetic strips or with wire or ribbon. Provide a wide variety of ribbon colors, scissors, and safety pins. Invite the congregation to braid the ribbons while reciting the prayer of the month, then attach them as colorful streamers to the wall or screen

### **Sand Garden Prayer**

Make use of a tabletop sand garden, which are widely available online and in stores (search for "desktop Zen garden"). Invite the congregation to silent contemplation of the monthly theme while "tending" the garden.

For more info: <http://www.wisconsinumc.org/Resources/Documents/AnnualConference/2015/MeetGodThroughPrayer.pdf>

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## *Pray in Many Places with Many People*

### **Pray with Your Delegation. Pray for Your Delegation.**

Delegates are listed in the order elected. Reserve delegates serve as needed in the order elected. All laity delegates are elected by laity; all clergy delegates are elected by clergy.

#### General Conference Delegates

- Laity: Lisa King, Barbara Dick, Gail Burgess
- Clergy: Dan Dick, Sam Royappa, Steve Zekoff

#### Jurisdictional Conference Delegates

- All General Conference laity and clergy delegates
- Laity: Katie Crise, Tom Popp, Judy Vasby
- Clergy: Amanda Stein, Jorge Mayorga-Solis, Dan Schwerin

#### Reserve Delegates

- Laity: Jennifer Southworth, John Lawson, Diane Odeen, Julie Schubring
- Clergy: Dawn Helton-Anishinaabqwa, Jeremy Deaner, George Kafer, Jenny Arneson

#### Post Prayers to the Wisconsin Delegation Blog

- <http://www.wisconsinumc.org/connections/general-ncj-conferences>

### **Pray with Your Congregation.**

Share the monthly prayers of this guide in some of the many ways suggested in all of the areas and aspects of the life of your congregation.

- Newsletters
- Worship Bulletins
- Worship Videos
- Sunday School for All Ages
- Youth Groups
- Adult Small Groups
- United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men Gatherings

### **Pray with United Methodist Leadership across the Connection.**

- Delegations from around the world
- Bishops
- Judicial Council
- Conference Staff
- Worship Leaders
- Congregations
- All who serve and are served with and through The United Methodist Church