

12 WEEK

DAILY

PRAYER

JOURNAL

NAME _____

First UMC

PURPOSE, PRAYER, PLAN

John Wesley the founder of Methodism once said:

"Proceed with much prayer and your way will be made plain."

"Prayer is where the action is."

"God will do nothing but in answer to prayer."

Jesus himself taught us how to pray..."Our Father who art in heaven..."

Prayer is an important part of our lives. It is how we communicate with the God who created us, knows us and wants to be present with us on our faith journey. It is through prayer that our lives are opened to the mystery of God. Without it, our lives lack any sense of direction. In his book The School of Prayer, Pope Benedict XVI says: "Brothers and sisters, let us learn to pause longer before God, who revealed himself in Jesus Christ, let us learn to recognize in silence, in our own hearts, his voice that call us and leads us back to the depths of our existence, to the source of life, to the source of salvation, to enable us to go beyond the limitations of our life and to open ourselves to God's dimension, to the relationship with him, which is Infinite Love."

In many of the Apostle Paul's letters he reminds us of the importance of prayer.

"...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." (Ephesians 6:18 NRSV)

"...rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." (Romans 12:12 MEV)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God." (Philippians 4:6 (MEV))

A 12 Week Journey

To help us learn more about the practice of prayer, First Church members are being asked to embark on a 12 week time of prayer, discernment and exploration. Our objectives are:

- To develop the spiritual life of our church members.
- To strengthen the spirituality of our staff and church leaders.
- To find God's direction in times of uncertainty.
- To encounter God's will in our lives and ministries.
- To prepare us for the work to come of helping First Church find its purpose, mission and vision for the present and future.

Members and staff will meet these objectives by:

- Watching the sermon series on prayer (or attending in person when we re-enter).
- Using this prayer journal.
- When available, joining either Pastor Edgar or Christine on zoom or by phone for 15 minutes of prayer. You may join us either at 7:00 AM or 8:00 PM Monday-Friday.
- Joining a prayer group of three that will commit to gather on zoom or the telephone weekly to join in conversation and prayer for 30 minutes. To sign up to participate in a prayer group, you may send an email to Lisa Karen at officemanager@dmfirstchurch.org or call her at 244-6209. Please state your preference for zoom or phone. Each group will determine its own meeting time.
- Come to the church to pray in the sanctuary or the chapel. The rooms are open between 8:00 am and noon.

Even if you choose to not join us by zoom or phone, we encourage you to use this prayer journal and pray along with other members of the congregation.

Enclosed you will find a gift from First Church. This handmade olive wood cross was crafted by artisans in Bethlehem. It is meant to be held in your palm while you pray or if you are feeling anxious.

WEEK ONE

**Beginning February 15
Foundations of Prayer**

Prayer of the Week

"God give to me the spiritual and emotional strength I need to endure this time of pandemic.

I pray for those who are ill, for first responders, doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists.

I also pray for those families who have lost loved ones to this disease and who were not able to say goodbye. Amen."

Scripture for the Day

– Listening for God's voice

Monday: Matthew 7:9-11

Tuesday: Luke 11:5-13

Wednesday: Luke 18:1-8

Thursday: Luke 22:39-46

Friday: I Kings 8:28

Saturday: 2 Chronicles 6:28-31

Prayer Practice

This week when you pray, try different prayer positions.

Sitting – denotes rest

Bowing – displays honor and humility

Kneeling – denotes surrender

Standing – shows a position of respect

Hands open and palms facing up – acknowledges willingness to receive

Prostrate – shows an awe of the holiness of God

Reflection and Insights

WEEK TWO

**Beginning February 22
How Do We Pray?**

Prayer of the Week

"Lord, teach me to pray."

Scripture for the Day **– Listening for God's voice**

Monday: Matthew 6:5-6
Tuesday: Matthew 6:7-8
Wednesday: Matthew 6:9-13
Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Friday: Matthew 26:41
Saturday: Luke 6:12-13

Prayer Practice

This week, in addition to asking God to teach you to pray, read the Lord's Prayer each day. Then daily examine one line or concept. For instance, what does it mean to you when you say "Our Father who art in heaven" or "hallowed be Thy name"? You might want to consider re-writing the prayer in your own words.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK THREE

**Beginning March 1
Praying the Scriptures**

Scripture for the Day – Listening for God’s voice

Monday: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Tuesday: Matthew 5:1-12

Wednesday: Luke 9:23-24

Thursday: Psalm 119:105

Friday: 2nd Timothy 3:14-17

Saturday: John 17:14-18

Prayer of the Week

"Loving God, who understands my needs before I pray and responds to my cry for help with assurance, peace and palpable presence, help me to pray using your word. May the holy scriptures guide me to your presence. Amen."

Prayer Practice

Augustine of Hippo said, "If the psalm prays, you pray. If the psalm laments, you lament. If the psalm exalts, you rejoice. If it hopes, you hope. If it fears, you fear. Everything written here is a mirror for us." As you pray the Psalms, you will learn how to pray in every season.

Choose a Psalm that you think will help you develop spiritually. Read it aloud and make the psalm's words your own words.

- Thanksgiving and Praise – Psalm 57: God is glorious and loving – exalt him with a steadfast heart!
- Submission to God/Wisdom – Psalm 1: Live in the way of the righteous by delighting in God's law.
- Petition (Comfort and Encouragement) – Psalm 4: In distress you can be filled with God's love, joy, peace.
- Petition (Longing for God) – Psalm 42: In troubles thirst deeply for the Living God.
- Confession of Sin – Psalm 32: Confess your sins and be blessed.
- Confession - Anger with your enemies – (Forgive us...) – Psalm 109: When betrayed vent anger to God and rely on His love.
- Dark Night of the Soul – Laments and complaints that God feels distant – Psalm 13: When God's face is hidden learn to trust him in your heart.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK

FOUR

Beginning March 8 Lectio Divina

Scripture for the Day

– Listening for God’s voice

Monday: Jeremiah 29:10-14

Tuesday: Psalm 27:1-5

Wednesday: Isaiah 9:2a-7

Thursday: Micah 6:8

Friday: Matthew 5:13-16

Saturday: Luke 6:32-36

Prayer of the Week

*"God for these times in
which we are living, show
us a new vision for our
church. Amen."*

Prayer Practice

Lectio Divina means "divine reading." It is a powerful way to encounter God in scripture. This practice has four phases.

1. Phase 1 – (Lectio: Reading/Listening) Choose a passage of scripture. (For practice, try the ones listed above.) Read the passage to yourself twice (once out loud is helpful). Listen for the word or phrase that catches your attention, not the literal meaning. Then silently focus on that word or phrase. Repeat it a few times. Allow it to sift through your heart and mind.
2. Phase 2 – (Meditatio) As you continue to focus on your word or phrase, pay attention to the thoughts and feelings it evokes. What images, thoughts or memories come to mind?
3. Phase 2 (Oratio) At some point you may find yourself wanting to speak to God. What desires has your prayer awakened? You may have found an area of your life that needs some work. You may find you are grateful for something and want to thank God. You may feel called to a new course of action in your life. Whatever it is you are feeling, don't rush the prayer. Wait and listen as God forms your prayer and desire. Then speak your prayer of desire, longing, or action to God. Continue to listen in silence.
4. Phase 4 – (In this phase, your conversation with God comes to a close.) You have heard a word from God and have expressed your response. Sit in silence. Allow your mind to settle. When you feel the prayer has come to an end, express your gratitude to God for the time you had together.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK SIX

Prayer of the Week

"Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen." (From the PCUSA Book of Common Worship, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993; p. 88)

**Beginning March 22
Prayer of Confession**

Scripture for the Day **– Listening for God's voice**

Monday: Psalm 51
Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 7:9-10
Wednesday: Psalm 38:18
Thursday: Proverbs 28:13
Friday: Luke 19:1-10
Saturday: 1 John 1:8-10

Prayer Practice

This week, honestly examine your life and confess your failures to God. "Lord, have mercy on me and forgive my sins."

Reflection and Insights

WEEK SEVEN

**Beginning April 5
Praying Through Fasting**

Scripture for the Day – Listening for God's voice

Monday: Matthew 6:16-18

Tuesday: Exodus 34:27-28

Wednesday: Ezra 8:21-23

Thursday: Isaiah 58:5-6

Friday: Joel 2:12-13

Saturday: Acts 13:1-3

Prayer of the Week

"God, I dedicate this time of prayer and fasting to you. Help me to hear your voice and grow in my spiritual development. Here I am bowing in the spirit and bowing in the flesh, humbling myself before you seeking your mercy, your forgiveness, your love, your guidance, your strength and your instruction. Amen."

Continued on next page

Prayer Practice

Fasting gives you more time for prayer. You can use the time you'd normally spend eating in prayer. In the Bible, fasting is always connected with prayer.

There are many types of fasts, and the option you choose depends upon your health, the desired length of your fast, and your preference:

- Water fast – abstain from all food and juices (water only)
- Partial fast – means to eliminate certain foods or specific meals
- Juice fast – drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast – one meal, one day. (Beginners should start slowly)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (see above)
- How much time you will devote to prayer?

*More ideas will be provided during the daily prayer sessions and the sermon.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK EIGHT

**Beginning April 12
Prayer of Blessing**

**Scripture for the Day
– Listening for God's voice**

Monday: Ephesians 3:14-19

Tuesday: Ephesians 1:15-19

Wednesday: Numbers 6:24-26

Thursday: Deuteronomy 11:26-28

Friday: Deuteronomy 16:16b-17

Saturday: Luke 24:50-53

Prayer of the Week

"Thank you for your great love and blessing over my life. Thank you that your favor has no end, but it lasts for my entire lifetime. Forgive me for sometimes forgetting that you are intimately acquainted with all of my ways, that you know what concerns me, and you cover me, as with a shield. I ask for your guidance so that I might walk fully in your blessing and goodness today. I ask that your face would shine on me and give me peace. Amen."

Prayer Practice

A breath prayer reminds us that it is God's breath in our lungs giving us life (see Genesis 2:7). In God we live and move and have our being, so our bodies are an important part of our conversations with God. As we inhale and exhale deeply, we are reminded that God gave us the gift of bodies into which God lovingly breathed when we were formed from dust. As you slow down and take notice, give attention to how you are feeling physically and emotionally. Allow yourself to be filled anew with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

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Feel free to add silent words to your breath in the rhythm of your prayer. Some examples might include the following:

Inhale: Lord

Exhale: Have mercy

Inhale: You are

Exhale: My shepherd

Inhale: I am

Exhale: with you

Inhale: My peace

Exhale: I give you

Reflection and Insights

WEEK NINE

**Beginning April 19
Creating a Home Altar**

Scripture for the Day

– Listening for God’s voice

Monday: Genesis 35:1-3

Tuesday: Psalm 43:3-4

Wednesday: Matthew 5:23-24

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 6:12-13

Friday: Colossians 3:13-14

Saturday: Romans 15:13

Prayer of the Week

"Lord, we thank you that you are the God of peace and love. Nothing can separate us from you. We praise you for the protection and favor you have shown to our family. Today we pray for (Dad, Mom, name of child/ren, extended family, pets, etc.) We trust that no matter what, you will guide us, protect us and be gracious toward us. Amen."

Prayer Practice

Designate a room, a corner, or even a closet as a prayer space with appropriate visual décor, Bible and devotional materials, a comfortable chair and perhaps a kneeler. A notepad to record prayer requests or insights can also be placed there.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK TEN

**Beginning April 26
Intercessory Prayer**

Scripture for the Day
– Listening for God’s voice

- Monday: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11
- Tuesday: Romans 8:34
- Wednesday: 1 Timothy 2:1
- Thursday: Romans 8:26-27
- Friday: Matthew 18:19-20
- Saturday: Matthew 5:43-45

Prayer of the Week

"Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear my prayers for this world that you love. Amen."

Prayer Practice

Our English word "intercession" is derived from the Latin for "to come between," which means both "obstruct" and "to interpose on behalf of" someone. As you begin this week, make a list of those for whom you want to intercede, those you wish to offer up to God. (Family, friends, government officials, our nation, people of the world, the church and its leaders etc.). Then each day offer to God a prayer on their behalf.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK ELEVEN

**Beginning May 3
Prayer Walk**

Prayer of the Week

"Loving God, open our eyes so we can see our community's needs. Help us be sensitive to others' suffering. May we be your agents of change in a world that more than ever needs your love and compassion. Amen."

Scripture for the Day

– Listening for God's voice

Monday: Genesis 13:14-17

Tuesday: Psalm 48:12-14

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 15:7-8

Thursday: Isaiah 61:1-4

Friday: Proverbs 11:9-11

Saturday: 2 Chronicles 7:14-18

Prayer Practice

As you pray, take a walk through your neighborhood. You may walk alone or with a friend. (If that isn't possible, look out your window.) This allows you to observe and discern what is happening in your community and helps us find ways to respond to our neighbor's needs. Prayer walking will encourage God's Kingdom to come and we will see our city transformed with the power, goodness, and mercy of God.

Reflection and Insights

WEEK TWELVE

**Beginning May 10
Praying Our Own Words**

Prayer of the Week

"Listening God, sometimes I do not know what to say but you know what is in my heart. Help me offer up to you praise and thanks. Hear my prayer and answer me when I call. Amen."

Scripture for the Day **– Listening for God's voice**

Monday: Psalm 5:1-3
Tuesday: Psalm 17:6
Wednesday: Matthew 7:7
Thursday: Psalm 61:1-2
Friday: 2 Samuel 22:7
Saturday: Psalm 28:2

Prayer Practice

After your prayer time, journal about your thoughts. During the week, write one or two prayers about what is on your heart.

Reflection and Insights

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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