

Holding the 2020 General Conference in Prayer

February 11, 2020

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Has God given you for the 2020 General Conference that will take place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 5-15? Do you feel a need, or desire, or urgency to pray with and for the elected delegates, alternates, leaders, participants and guests?

I believe God is calling you and me and many in our global United Methodist family to pray earnestly and persistently for our church. The prayer below is the prayer I feel called to pray. You have permission to use it, edit it or make it your own.

After the prayer, you will also find an invitation for you to join in one of seven prayer actions. Please listen for the Holy Spirit to speak to you and then respond in faith and joyful obedience. God can and will work all of this together for good.

**Gracious God fill me with your wisdom, love and compassion—
that I may pray in your name, intercede in your nature, and align with your will.
Incline the hearts of every United Methodist to your heart—
that we may all love alike, even though we do not think alike.**

As we intercede for each elected delegate and alternate, grant us courage and clarity to pray with the Holy Spirit for each one—regardless of the position he/she holds on the issues that divide us. Help every delegate and every alternate know and feel our prayers supporting them on their journey discernment.

Lord Jesus Christ, bless the Council of Bishops, bless the staff serving the General Conference, bless the volunteers, guests and visitors. Give us all the mind of Christ, that we may know how to pray. Give us eyes open to see each person and her/his needs—that our prayers might be a part of your answer to those needs.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send your Spirit and we shall be created. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations. May your

**kingdom come in us and your will be done in us—on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen.**

Below you will find information about the resources created to help our beloved church pray our way into a season of blessing and sending. The time of winners and losers is over. This is a season for separation and blessing. Like the New Testament Church during the second missionary journey, we have irreconcilable differences, just as Paul and Barnabas have irreconcilable differences (see Acts 15:36-41). Just as they went on different journeys, it is time for the United Methodist Church to pursue different missionary paths to proclaim Christ in ways that each group believes to be faithful.

At the request of The United Methodist Council of Bishops Worship Committee, The Upper Room and United Methodist Communications have collaborated to create a way for the entire United Methodist Church to pray together for 40 days before the General Conference begins—and through each day that the General Conference meets.

There is no question that this will be a historic event in the life of the global Methodist movement. For all of us who are not elected delegates, alternates, leaders or staff, our part is to pray: as an individual, as a family, as a small group, a local church, district, annual conference or Central Conference. This is your personal invitation to engage your prayer with the prayers of 12 million United Methodists around the world. We have one goal in mind, to create an atmosphere of prayer for all those elected to make decisions on our behalf and for the future direction for our Wesleyan mission in the years ahead.

Prayer Action #1.

March 1 through March 21 download the free 40-Days of Prayer and make it available to your family, local church, district and annual conference. The PDF text is currently available in the four official written languages of the General Conference: English, French, Portuguese and Kiswahili. The **40 Days of Prayer** follows the pattern of the Revised Common Lectionary. Each day there is a passage of scripture to read, followed by a personal reflection written by one person selected from a diverse group of United Methodist delegates, members and friends from around the world; followed by a prayer for the day. The Prayer Guide also includes information about how it may be used in a family or small group setting.

Prayer Action #2.

On Sunday, March 22, play the video for your congregation which will introduce the content and process for the rest of that week. Beginning March 22, there is a

brief video featuring one active Bishop from a different region of the USA and the world. Each video will provide instruction and encouragement to pray with and for the elected leaders who will gather in Minneapolis. Bishop Hoshibata, Chairperson for the Council of Bishops Worship Committee, will call The United Methodist Church to pray and prepare for the first day of the **40 Days of Prayer** on March 26, when the global UMC will pray with and for the 862 delegates, the hundreds of alternates, the Council of Bishops, and all those involved in the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis.

Sunday, March 29: Bishop Cynthia Moore Koi-Koi will introduce the meditations for that week and offer encouragement to pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the Northeast Jurisdiction.

Sunday, April 5 (Holy Week): Bishop Samuel Quire, Jr., will call the global UMC call to pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the Central Conferences.

Sunday, April 12 (Easter Sunday): Bishop Debora Wallace-Padgett will give guidance and encouragement for the world to pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the Southeast Jurisdiction.

Sunday, April 19: Bishop Laurie Haller will preview the week and exhort the UMC to pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the North Central Jurisdiction.

Sunday, April 26: Bishop Jimmy Nunn will preview the week and help the UMC pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the South Central Jurisdiction

Sunday, May 3: Bishop Karen Oliveto will preview the week and guide the UMC to pray with and for the elected delegates and alternates of the Western Jurisdiction.

Prayer Action #3.

Listen to a scriptural Podcast created by UMCOM to aid United Methodists to reflect each day of the General Conference on the biblical text for the plenary worship service of the day.

Prayer Action #4.

UMCprays.org is the website where all the free videos, podcasts, and language versions of the 40 Days of Prayer are available. This prayer website will have additional prayer resources and online coaching to help you engage others in prayer.

Prayer Action #5.

Pray for the Dakotas-Minnesota GC2020 Host Committee chaired by Rev. Jim Haun and Becky Boland; along with the Prayer Team led by Rev. Pam Serdar who is designing and staffing a **Prayer Room** at the General Conference site.

Prayer Action #6.

Intercessory Prayer Volunteers will be available at the General Conference. Anyone interested in serving in this role should contact Rev. Tom Albin (talbin@upperroom.org). Intercessory prayer volunteers pray quietly in each of the legislative sessions, pray with delegates before and after legislative sessions, and pray during the plenary sessions of the General Conference.

Prayer Action #7.

Volunteer Spiritual Directors will be available at the General Conference. The Upper Room is responsible to recruit, train, and supervise these volunteer spiritual directors who will be available by appointment to help delegates, alternates, leaders, visitors, and guests who desire an opportunity to receive spiritual support as each one seeks God's will and direction during the General Conference. Anyone interested in serving in this role should contact Rev. Tom Albin at The Upper Room for information about how to apply, provide references and be selected by a peer review committee.