

Pray for General Conference

February 23-26, St. Louis, MO
www.gc2019.iaumc.org

Gracious and loving God, who leads, teaches and guides, You who offer compassion, grace and mercy, be with us now. We passionately seek Your presence during challenging times and circumstances, and we trust that you are moving in and around our lives. We, as one part of your Body, the Church, go into the days and weeks ahead seeking to discern Your deep desire for us as The United Methodist Church. Give us courage as we continue to live and respond to Your invitation to be Your hands, feet and voice. We ask for a fresh wind of Your Spirit and guidance for each of us as individuals, for the faithful congregations, and for this global community of United Methodists. We ask for Your wisdom and presence for those among us who have been called to serve as delegates as the Special Session of General Conference gathers today. Grant them clarity and a discerning spirit as they seek to listen for You in their midst. Reveal to them Your deep desire for our future as a church. Give them and us the faith to lay aside our personal wants and needs so that we can be truly present to You, sit with You in reverence and awe, and listen deeply for the still small voice that woos us, comforts us, and invites us to that place where we can live fully and wholly into the Kingdom life that You desire for us. We lay all this before You as the deep desire of our hearts and minds in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Pray for our Iowa Delegates

Phil Carver
Katie Dawson
Diane Wasson Eberhart
Becky Heeren
Brian Milford
Norma Morrison
John Rothlisberger
Darcy Rubenking
Craig Scott
Lilian Gallo Seagren
Tom Shinkle
Barrie Tritle

THURSDAY 02.28.19 [Luke 6:27-35](#)

Bishop Reuben Job asks, "Where are the boundaries?...what if my gift of goodness, small or large, is rejected? Suppose I were to seek compromise in conflict and my efforts were ridiculed? What if my efforts were seen as weakness and my concerns were overlooked?" (*Three Simple Rules*) Jesus said, "Do good to your enemies. That's what God does."

- List all the ways you can think of that God "is kind to the ungrateful and wicked." Jesus said God's example gives us a pattern to follow. What "enemies" or "ungrateful and wicked" people can you impact? Using your list, think of ways you might do good to them this week. Who might think of **you** as an "enemy"? Do good to them, too!
- Bishop Job's book also notes that "taking appropriate care of self and living selflessly are not opposites....To love God with all of life and to love neighbor as self is not to denigrate, deny or devalue self." What are some ways you have found of doing healthy self-care? How do these energize and empower you to do good for others?

FRIDAY 03.01.19 [Galatians 5:18-25](#)

Like John Wesley, the apostle Paul did not stop with "Do no harm," but went on to focus on all the good fruit our lives can bear. We read the first part of this passage last week, listing the harmful "acts of the sinful nature." But we don't avoid harm just to leave our lives swept and empty (see Luke 11:24-26). The Holy Spirit bears superb fruit in open, yielded hearts.

- Think through the qualities listed as "the fruit of the Spirit." What possibilities for doing good would each fruit create or magnify in your life? Which one or two of the "fruits" do you want to ask the Holy Spirit to bear in your life in the months ahead?
- "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" Paul asked in Galatians 3:2. We can almost see the glint in the apostle's eye as he noted dryly of the fruit of the Spirit that "Against such things there is no law." Have you ever tried to earn God's favor by "observing the law"? Have you found the spiritual freedom of living "by the Spirit," and living in grace?

SATURDAY 03.02.19 [1 Peter 3:8-17](#)

This passage makes little sense if we're busy "climbing the ladder" and seeking power. When it was written, most Romans mocked Christians as weak. After all, Christians believed (as Pastor Steven Blair said recently) that a crucified man was God; Romans worshipped the mighty emperor! But Peter's letter makes the God-given strength to do good (rather than to grab status or comfort) the basic standard of a life worth living.

- "Self-care," writes Bishop Job, "begins with the acknowledgment and reminder that each one of us is the object of God's love. Each one of us is embraced in the unlimited, saving and transforming love of God" (*Three Simple Rules*). How confident are you that as Psalm 34 (quoted in verse 12) said "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer"? In what parts of your life do you need that trust to keep you going from day to day?

Family Activity: Engage your family in "doing good" at home. Write each family member's name on a slip of paper and place it in a container. Ask each person to draw a name. (Make sure no one gets his or her own name.) Encourage everyone to "do good" this week for the person whose name they chose. Good deeds could include helping with the other's chores, coloring a picture or playing a game, giving hugs, and/or sharing supportive words. If a child is too young to participate on his or her own, assign a partner. At the end of the week, share a simple "do good" celebration. Then select different names and repeat each week. Thank God for the chance to "do good" in your own family as well as throughout the world.