

## **General Conference prayer vigil: Oklahoma Conference liturgy for March 2**

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church meets once every four years to determine the denomination's future direction, consider revisions to church law, and approve plans and budgets for church-wide programs. The 2016 meeting will take place May 10-20 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon.

With the intent of creating a groundswell of prayer in the days leading up to the General Conference, the denomination's Council of Bishops has invited each of the annual conferences to host a 24-hour prayer effort on a specific date.

**The designated date for the Oklahoma Conference United Methodists to pray is March 2.** The following day, March 3, is assigned to the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

**Ginger Howl, retired Oklahoma deacon, created this liturgy for use on March 2 by individuals, families, and churches, as requested by Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr. The liturgy also may be used at any other time leading up to the General Conference.**

Several hundred elected delegates cast votes in this major meeting. The Oklahoma Conference will have 14 votes.

The church-wide prayer movement serves as a response to the most important request recorded in Scripture: "Lord, teach us to pray." All are invited -- delegates, bishops, clergy, laity, congregations, and small groups -- into spiritual preparation for General Conference.

"United Methodists from all over the world will come together in the spirit of Christian conferencing in Portland," said Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett of the North Alabama Conference and chairperson of the team that helped initiate the movement. "We want those attending to know that their United Methodist family is praying for them and with them -- that God will lead them in the decisions that they will make for the future of our church, and that the event will be a positive Christian witness in how we conference together."

The Upper Room, by invitation from the General Conference worship team and the Council of Bishops, has created resources for the prayer movement, including a daily prayer book, prayer vigil guides, and a supporting website with prayer wall.

"I'm personally convinced that the one thing every United Methodist can do to influence the outcome of General Conference is to pray," said Oklahoma Conference clergyman Tom Albin, who is dean of The Upper Room Chapel. "When we pray, we can be convinced that God will hear and respond."

Find more details and resources at: <http://60daysofprayer.org/>

# Oklahoma Conference Prayer for General Conference

## March 2, 2016

This brief service of prayer may be used by individuals or groups who gather on March 2, 2016.  
(The hymns may be omitted if hymnals are not available.)

### GATHERING - Psalm 95:1-7

O come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;  
let us make a joyful noise with songs of praise!**

For the Lord is a great God,  
and a great ruler above all gods;  
**In whose hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains also.**

The sea is God's, who made it,  
and the dry land, which God's hands have formed.

**O come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!**

For the Lord is our God,  
**and we are the people of God's pasture,  
and the sheep of God's hand.**

HYMN - *Christ, from Whom All Blessings Flow* – No. 550, United Methodist Hymnal (Charles Wesley, text)

### PRAYER

Let us pray:

**O God of all times and places, we pray for your Church,  
and for the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, soon to convene.  
Your Church is set today amid the perplexities of a changing order,  
and face to face with new tasks.**

**Baptize her afresh in the life-giving spirit of Jesus.**

**Bestow upon her a great responsiveness to duty,  
a swifter compassion with suffering,  
and an utter loyalty to your will.**

**Help her to proclaim boldly the coming of your kingdom.**

**Put upon her lips the ancient gospel of her Lord.**

**Fill her with the prophets' scorn of tyranny,  
and with a Christlike tenderness for the heavy-laden and downtrodden.**

**Bid her cease from seeking her own life, lest she lose it.**

**Make her valiant to give up her life to humanity,**

**that, like her crucified Lord, she may mount by the path of the cross to a higher glory;**

**through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.** - No. 505, UM Book of Worship (Walter Rauschenbusch)

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi from his prison cell, giving them advice and quoting one of the earliest Christian hymns, written just 10 or 15 years after the resurrection. His words and

that ancient hymn are just as relevant for our church today:

## SCRIPTURE READING - Philippians 2:1-11

One Voice: If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

**All: Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## SILENCE FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

### RESPONSE

As we are gathered to pray for the General Conference of our church we are reminded of these words from the Wesley Covenant Service:

**Christ has many services to be done: some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honor, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both; in some we may please Christ and please ourselves, in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us.**

And also, we remember the vow we each made at our baptism:

**As members of The United Methodist Church, we will faithfully participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.**

### PRAYER

Let us pray:

**O gracious God, we pray for your holy Church universal, and especially today we pray for The United Methodist Church of which we are a part, that you would be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it;**

**where it is right, establish it;**  
**where it is in want, provide for it;**  
**where it is divided, reunite it;**  
**for the sake of the one who died and rose again,**  
**and ever lives to make intercession for us all,**  
**Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.** - No. 501, UM Book of Worship (Book of Common Prayer)

**HYMN** - *Blest Be the Tie that Binds* – No. 557, United Methodist Hymnal

**CLOSING** - Philippians 4:8-9

Finally, beloved, whatever is true,

**whatever is honorable,**

whatever is just,

**whatever is pure,**

whatever is pleasing,

**whatever is commendable,**

if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,

**think about these things.**

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me,

**and the God of peace will be with you. Amen.**