



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



For Immediate Release

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Bishops kick off Phase 3 of Praying our Way Forward

WASHINGTON, D.C. _ The Council of Bishops in partnership with The Upper Room is launching Phase 3 of Praying our Way Forward. Phase 1 involved 84 members of the Council of Bishops praying for The United Methodist Church's way forward for 15 minutes daily, from August to December 2016. This was followed by Phase 2, which resulted in 18 continuous months of daily individual and corporate prayer by faithful members of annual conferences around the globe.

"Now we are ready to launch Phase 3, which begins June 3 and continues through the Special Session of General Conference in February 2019. In this phase, we are encouraging every United Methodist to fast weekly and to pray daily with the Council of Bishops," said Bishop Al Gwinn, the Prayer Team Coordinator.

In Phase 3, all United Methodists are invited to:

1. Engage in a weekly Wesleyan 24-hour fast from Thursday after dinner to Friday mid-afternoon. Those who have health situations causing food fasts to be inadvisable might consider fasting from social media, emails or another daily activity.
2. Pause and pray for our church's mission and way forward daily for four minutes from **2:23** through **2:26** am or pm in their own time zone OR at another time. This is because the Special Session of General Conference will be held February 23 through February 26, 2019.
3. Pray using a weekly prayer calendar that will be posted on the UMCPrays.org website from June 2, 2018 through the end of February 2019. The calendar will list a unique cluster of names each week. The names will balance USA bishops and delegates with Central Conference bishops and delegates. It will also include General Secretaries, Commission on a Way Forward members, the Commission of the General Conference and the staff of the General Conference.

Tom Albin, Director of Spiritual Formation for The Upper Room said, "We urge every Annual Conference to use the video available on the umcprays.org website to promote Phase 3 of Praying Our Way Forward. There will also be a local church media kit with downloadable resources including logos, social media posts, and bulletin inserts available by Memorial Day."

"We believe that the acts of weekly fasting and prayer will help us approach General Conference both individually and corporately in a posture of humility and receptivity to one another and to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit," added Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, Council of Bishops Life Together chair.

For more details, visit UMCPrays.org.

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