

We sense that we are adrift on raft that is being torn in two by the wind and current of this world; instead of being held together by the bindings of your Holy Spirit.

We come together to pray for our beloved United Methodist Church and the Bishop's Commission on a Way Forward. We pray that the commission finds unity in the presence of your Holy Spirit. We pray they discover The Way Forward that puts United Methodism back on the path you have charted for us. For we desire that our church is once again the strong life boat that invites all people to find salvation in you through the witness of your people called Methodist.

Lord in this season turn our despair into hope!

Amen.

Burt Williams

## **Saturday, February 25**

Our Father and our God, we come before you in the name of our big brother, Jesus, Lord and Savior of our lives! You have bid us to come unto you all who are weary and burdened and we shall find rest. You've also invited us to come boldly before the throne of grace that we may find help and mercy in our time of need. Father, this is one those times, even as the world needs you, we find the Church needing you just as much. Forgive our complacency at times when we should be shining forth your light into dark places brighter than it's ever shined before, because it is in your light that everything melts away except the pure Glory of our God.

This is the place where we're drawn closest to you as we experience your love and we pray for this sacred space for the Commission on the Way Forward as they share together, deliberate together, cry together and smile through their tears together on behalf of the whole Church. May they feel our love for them and your love for them through us that Christ may dwell in each of their hearts by faith and as they are rooted and grounded in love they may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, depth, and height; and that they may be assured of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3: 17-19). Guide them we pray with your loving eye and righteous hand in their decision making on our behalf that we may give you glory praise and honor all the days of our lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen!**

Pamela Shoffner

## **Praying Our Way Forward**

### **Sunday, February 19**

You are our life, O Lord. Receive our prayers, offered not only in words but also in spirit, by which we come asking, seeking, and knocking for our hearts' desires. Grant comfort to all who hope in you.

We give you thanks for the gift of your Church and for the mystery of your love in each other. Lord of the Harvest, "send out laborers into the harvest," that we like the early church may minister in this beautifully diverse world as you consecrate our efforts to make new disciples of Jesus Christ.

Guide the hearts of those who have been selected and appointed at this time to exercise discernment on behalf of the church. Grant them knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, that their delight be the fear of the Lord.

May your Light direct our prayers, conversations, actions, and decisions so that we may be more closely drawn to Jesus, your Son, our Savior, the Light of the World. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

Blessed Consoler, Comforter, and Teacher, help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus rather than being distracted by the storms that surround us, for we know he is with us in every tempest. Keep us faithful in all we do, especially in our work for unity, that we might be one in the faith of Christ. Amen.

Bishop Paul Leeland

Resident Bishop of Western North Carolina Conference

### **Monday, February 20**

#### **The Climb**

O Lord,  
Even as we struggle  
And groan under this crust of frozen earth  
Your steadfast love measures each step.  
Lead us as we re-imagine  
Transformation  
Balanced within  
Unity,  
New forms  
Living in  
Holy Places.  
As we climb mountains,  
And the air grows thin,  
May we be reminded to listen with

Our eyes and our hearts.  
You are the rope that we grasp,  
The solid footing on which we stand,  
And the broad horizon we will see  
When this veil of our own self-made fog clears.  
Lead us, again, as we,

Brother and sister,  
Make our way,  
Hand in hand  
To see together  
The way forward.

Amy Vaughan

### **Tuesday, February 21**

Heavenly Father, we come to you, with knees bent, asking for your guidance as we navigate these turbulent times. The feeling is almost like what the disciples must have experienced in the boat while crossing Lake Gennesaret, helpless, before JESUS came and calmed the waters. We see brothers and sisters going against brothers and sisters because of disagreements in interpretation of your commands.

You gave Moses tablets with your commands written on them for us to live by. You sent your Son, JESUS, to reinforce those commands. Yet we continue to live by our own rules. We have fallen away from you and in-fact are falling at a faster rate today away from you. We continue to put our wants and desires ahead of your righteous commands.

So we ask Father GOD, help us to remember that your way is the only way to reach those Heavenly Gates. Help us to once again live into your word as David did when he was confronted by Nathan for his misdeeds.

Oh LORD, guide the leaders of our church, this nation and all the world to seek peace. Seeking peace with each other....in a peaceful way. We ask for this, Lord on behalf of all humankind. In your Son's name, JESUS CHRIST, we pray. Amen.

Reynaldo Rodriguez

### **Wednesday, February 22**

PRAYER FOR THOSE DISCERNING AND WORKING FOR THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH:

*During a mission weekend in which we were working on a habitat house my three year old son fell asleep during our closing worship service. During the prayer time he mutters aloud, "Daddy built the house but he didn't put the roof on...." Today I echo my son's prayer.*

Creating God, giver of dreams and visions; by the power of your Holy Spirit move us into a place of holy imagination. Through Your perfect love cast out all fear so that we may dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Thank You for a roofless house. Build Your house where the sky is the limit. That's Your church and our joyful prayer. Amen.

Brennan and (mommy) Nicole Jones

### **Thursday, February 23**

Dear Creator of all people and Lord of Lords,  
Today we recognize that we are a broken people and that the world in which we live is in a struggle to bring peace and faith to all. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who by example allows us to love others just as they are and accept them no matter where they are from, what language they speak, or their gender. Strengthen our faith at this time when we want to include others and sometimes find ourselves judging based on our own narrow perspective. Remind us that we love because God first loved us (I John 4:19). Open our minds, our hearts and our arms to embrace our neighbor, and offer the good news of Christ to those we meet. Please bless your church with unity in the Holy Spirit. Amen

Querido Creador de toda persona y Señor de los Señores,  
Hoy reconocemos que somos un pueblo quebrantado y que el mundo en el que vivimos está en una lucha por traer paz y fe a todos. Te damos gracias por Jesucristo, que por medio de su ejemplo nos permite amar a los demás tal como son y aceptarlos sin importar de dónde vienen, qué idioma hablan o su género. Fortalezca nuestra fe durante esta época cuando queremos incluir a otros y en ocasiones nos encontramos juzgando basándonos en nuestra propia perspectiva limitada. Recuérdenos que amamos porque Dios nos amó primero (I Juan 4:19). Abran nuestras mentes, nuestros corazones y nuestros brazos para abrazar a nuestro prójimo, y ofrecer las buenas nuevas de Cristo a los que nos encontramos. Bendice tu iglesia con la unidad del Espíritu Santo. Amén

Susan S. Webster

### **Friday, February 24**

God of Hope,

We acknowledge that when we think of the future of The United Methodist Church, we too often despair. We despair because we do not see a way forward that keeps us near our brothers and sisters. We despair because we see division instead of unity. We have lost our ability to read your Scriptures and come to a common understanding of how it is that we are to live and witness in response to Your sacrificial love.