

**MISSION
IMPACT
CELEBRATION**

2014 PRAYER BOOK



Epworth United Methodist Church

**PRAYER BOOKLET FOR
MISSION IMPACT CELEBRATION
APRIL 4-6, 2014**

This booklet is written by our congregation to assist us in preparing our hearts and minds for our upcoming Mission Impact Celebration. This is God's weekend to inspire and encourage us to find our calling and mission He has chosen for us. Prayer is the cornerstone of preparation for our weekend. We want to pray intentionally and daily for the missionaries who are coming to share with us. We are praying for them and their missions that God will provide for their needs. We pray that God will be honored and glorified through what they share with us.

We often wonder how people can be so committed to the call of God on their lives. These invited guests will share with us their calling, and how God has provided for them and their missions every step of the way.

Be in prayer using this devotional booklet to allow the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart and mind for the events and messages of the weekend. Seek Him. Call to Him. Surrender to Him. He has the plan for each of us. He is calling each of us to be in mission and ministry in His Name everyday, wherever we are.

I am very grateful to all who contributed to this booklet. You will be inspired as you read their stories and thoughts. Pray without ceasing over the next weeks leading up to our MIC. To God be the glory!

Penny Vaughan

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved." John 3:17

As John 3:17 tells us, it is God Himself who, out of love for creation, has sent His Son to save transgressors and reconcile them to Himself. When we look at the wide scope of redemptive history we see that God has always been the one who sends out messengers for the purpose of salvation. God sent Moses to Pharaoh to liberate the children of Israel from slavery. He sent the prophets over and over in the Old Testament to call the people to repent of their sins in order that they might not be destroyed. When mankind continued in sin, God made the ultimate sacrifice and sent His only Son to die for us (Romans 5:8, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.").

Jesus then commanded us to continue bringing the message of salvation to those who have never heard it (Matthew 28:19-20). We do this in many ways. Because He first loved us, and gave His life for us, we are asked and expected to obey this commandment. Not all of us are called to be full-time missionaries, but all of us are called to be involved in missions. If not as goers, then as senders, who pray, give, wait for God's direction, and follow.

Our MIC gives us an opportunity to hear from those who are called to full-time missions. As we pray for this weekend and those who will be coming, may we pray that each one of us will have a willing and obedient heart to follow Jesus' commandment to us, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all those in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world.

Prayer: Gracious God may we vividly remember your wonderful, unconditional love that sent Jesus to die for each one of us. As we pray for our MIC and the missionaries that will be coming, may each one of us open our hearts and minds to what God would have us to do to be about "Going into all the world to share the gospel." Amen

Aline Wesley

Pray for Bishop McAlilly as he guides our conference and spiritual leaders. Pray for our pastors that they will be filled with the Holy Spirit to bring God's message for each of us. Pray that we will be transformed and inspired to be in mission daily by the messages God sends to us through the missionaries who will share with us during our Mission Impact Celebration.

USING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Wed., April 2, 2014

1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

By God's grace, each Christian has received at least one spiritual gift. God freely gave this gift for the purpose of ministry to and for the church. God wants us to do his work in a gracious, but genuine manner. We may use these talents to serve others in numerous ways such as supporting a favorite charity, volunteering in the church nursery, visiting shut-ins, going on a mission trip, serving on a church committee, helping the homeless, and through prayer.

One of the most memorable children's activities last year was the Shoebox Ministry. The children were so proud and all smiles as they filled up the shoeboxes with clothing, books, and toys during Sunday school. Not only did we have great attendance, but love and enthusiasm filled the air. We should always be ready to serve one another.

After working in Williamson County Schools for many years, I had an eye opening experience in a Metro Nashville high school this past December. We noticed that some students were draping towels around their shoulders on cold days. Upon inquiry, it was discovered that many of these students were homeless and spending many nights in the family car when shelters and churches were not available. A parent organized a fundraiser to purchase new coats and personal hygiene items for these underprivileged students. It was further discovered that this high school has 34 homeless students out of 680 students. Over seventy-five percent are on free or reduced lunch. Yet these students hosted a fundraiser for a student who lost his home in a fire over the holidays.

In Acts 20:35, we are reminded by the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than receive." Our purpose is to use our gifts by serving God and helping others.

Prayer: Father, Help me to understand the needs of my neighbors, both near and far away. Help me to discover any spiritual gifts that you have given me. I pray that I will use these gifts to glorify you and show your love. Please sustain and protect your servants. May we put on the whole armor of God as we spread your word. May we always be open to your call. In Jesus name I pray, Amen

Angie Ketchum

Pray for children all over the world. Pray that they will know love. Pray that they will be blessed and not abused. Pray that God will open our hearts to love children and to be about justice for them. Pray for all of our missionaries who are involved in helping children to know that they are loved and valued: Sweet Sleep; Against the Grain; Miriam's Promise; Vision for Chile; Mountain Top.

PRAY DAILY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES AND SPEAKERS

Bishop W.T. (Bill) McAlilly

Bishop of the Memphis and Tennessee
Conferences of the United Methodist Church

Roberta Fanelli-Davis

Sweet Sleep
Nashville, Tennessee

Olivia Evans

Mountain Top
Monteagle, Tennessee

Nick Haigler

UMC Global Missionary intern, Domestic
Outreach Coordinator, Wesley Foundation
University of Alabama
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

DeeDee and Kristopher Hatchell

Former missionaries to Guatemala
Nashville, Tennessee

Rob and Meredith Kendall

Against the Grain
Franklin, Tennessee

Tom Orme

Vision for Chile
Franklin, Tennessee

Debbie Robinson

Miriam's Promise
Nashville, Tennessee

“WHAT IS THAT IN YOUR HAND?”

Tue., March 11, 2014

Exodus 4:1-2 Moses protested again, “Look, they won’t believe me! They won’t do what I tell them. They’ll just say, ‘The Lord never appeared to you.’ Then the Lord asked him, “What do you have in your hand?”

When God called Moses, he was holding a shepherd’s staff, something he had been using for forty years to herd sheep. In Moses’ eyes his staff appeared to be just an ordinary staff, but in the hands of God it became something powerful and life changing.

A story is told of a Missionary to China in the 1930’s who found a beautiful necklace in a Chinese junk shop in Canton China. He bought it for his wife’s anniversary for about \$20. They noticed an inscription on the back which said, “N de J.” On coming back to the United States, his family urged him to have the necklace appraised. The missionary was shocked when every jeweler whom he contacted became excited and each one researched the history of the necklace. It was found to probably have been a necklace that Napoleon had given to Josephine, which was worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The missionary and his wife had no idea of the value of that which they had in their hands. For years they did not know the treasure they held.

Andrew, whom God called to be his disciple, first found his own brother Peter and led him to Jesus. Andrew is also the disciple who told Jesus about the little boy with the five loaves and two fishes although he didn’t know how Jesus could use them. Not a great deal is said of Andrew but we see that in these two instances God used Andrew’s obedient heart in what might have seemed little things, to provide significant experiences for the world. We need always to be willing to do what God is asking us to do with the everyday things in our lives.

The great commission, (Matt.28: 19-20) commands us to go into all the world beginning in Jerusalem, where we are, using those things that we feel might be insignificant to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus Christ. As we look forward to our MIC, let’s be mindful that God can, and is willing to use us, where we are, with what we have in our hands, treasures that we might not recognize. This might be the hand of a child who needs a Sunday School teacher, a neighbor who needs physical or spiritual help, a need that comes to us through our church mission program or through special offerings that we are asked to give, and always the hand of prayer that helps us to ask God to use us however, and wherever He leads.

Prayer: Please show me what is “in my hand” that God may anoint for service. In His Name, Amen

Aline Wesley

Pray for DeeDee and Kris Hatchell as they prepare to share their experiences with us. Pray for them as they seek God’s guidance in knowing their next mission for Him.

SERVE BY GIVING.... HELP BY SHOPPING

Tue., April 1, 2014

When contemplating missions and Serving God, “Giving” is often ‘preached’.... But SHOPPING?? How can one possibly serve God, the poor of Spirit, the needy, and the desperately forgotten ones by SHOPPING? A Biblical oxymoron, for sure...

I volunteered at the Graceworks thrift store and just noticed a newly painted ‘slogan’ on their delivery panel truck.... Serve by Giving... Help by Shopping and that same day I overheard its perfect explanation from a woman delivering her unneeded but useful clothing and house ware items at the back door. She joyfully exclaimed, “Here are my donations... and now I can’t wait to go around to the front door and SHOP!” She was serving the poor by giving, but helping further by shopping; availing cash to help pay utility bills for a family afflicted with extraordinary medical expenses uncovered by their insurance. Others come to Graceworks for spiritual and financial help because of a job loss or taking leave to care for an elderly parent or sick child....

In the book of Ephesians, Paul paints a clear picture of God’s love for everyone in the body of Christ. No matter our wealth or abilities, we are all necessary. God’s family would not be complete without any one of us. Recognizing such a purpose and high calling should fill us with joy and encouragement to live each day as true children of God in Christ. Whether you visit Graceworks at the front or back door; to volunteer, donate, or because you need help; be assured God’s Mercy and Grace are at work. Please talk to me if you’re curious about what you might donate in product or service or how you can volunteer.... And please when I’m at Graceworks or wherever representing our family ...

“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.” Ephesians 6:19

“Peace to you... and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.” Ephesians 6:23

Marianne Richards

Pray for Bishop McAlilly as he prepares his messages to share with us during our Mission Impact Celebration. Pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will fill him as he guides our conference in mission and ministry

SEEKING GOD'S GUIDANCE

Mon., March 31, 2014

With the many missionaries and the vast number of opportunities that they bring for service possibilities it seems to be somewhat overwhelming to determine where to serve. How do you decide what to do or who to help? What if you don't have the skills or means to make any great impact with a particular mission? These obstacles can seem insurmountable.

I have found myself wanting to do mission work but not knowing what or when to do it. In praying for opportunities to serve I have discovered that God opens the doors to the unexpected. Last year I felt a strong push from God to go to Oklahoma in the immediate wake of the devastating tornadoes that ravaged Moore, Oklahoma. As I quickly prepared to go and informed friends of the decision, there were many naysayers. "You'll never get in anywhere to help anyone, no one will let you do anything because you aren't with a specific group". Doubt crept into my mind and heart. What if I couldn't "get in" or what if no one allowed me to do anything? I could have just stayed home and succumbed to that doubt. Certainly nothing would have happened then. But I didn't. Despite the doubts God wouldn't let me turn back. Instead I listened to God's word and made the trip. Miraculously gates were opened and roadblocks moved aside. Literally, a closed exit on the interstate opened as I approached, state troopers saw my supplies for the victims and I was allowed access to the tornado torn neighborhoods. I had no particular skills, no specific training and no group backing, but with God as the leader and navigator I was allowed to do His work.

"... With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:26

Prayer: Father, open my heart to Your possibilities. Lead me in the direction You choose for me. Allow me to be Your hands and feet in the mission field, however that looks. Give me a child's obedience when it comes to doing Your will. Amen

Debbie Temple

Pray for Olivia Evans and the ministry of Mountain Top. Pray for the people who live in the Grundy County, Monteagle Mountain area that their lives will be touched by the love of the people who come to minister and serve them in Jesus' name.

SHARING YOUR UNIQUENESS

Wed., March 12, 2014

"I command you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: proclaim the word; be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching." 2 Timothy 4: 1-2

There was once an estate sale. Among the cherished possessions of some long past person, there was a small dusty violin. As each of the items were systematically sold, they came to the violin. Many previous items had been sold as antiques or locked boxes with untold treasures inside and the bidding was always started high. As the pile of debris narrowed to the violin the beginning biddings started lower and lower. When it was time for the violin to go to auction, the auctioneer announced this dusty old violin to the highest bidder and started at \$5. There were no takers, the violin sat as everyone waited for someone to make a bid so they could all move on. From the back of the room, an older gentlemen slowly approached, gently took the violin in his hands and tweaked the strings testing them for taught and tenor. He took up the bow and began to fill the audience with such a beautiful melody that no one could take a breath for fear of missing out on the harmonies as they rung through the open rafters. After the melody was done, the violin was returned to the stand, the old man removed himself from the podium and disappeared into the crowd. Suddenly, the bidding was heard to begin as high as any previous bid had been.

The difference wasn't the violin, or even the music that rang through the rafters sweetly charming the money from the bidders; it was the fact that this same violin had been touched by the master's hand, and thusly showed its full potential to the world.

We are each Masters of our rite. We each have a special skill that is special unto each of us. Have you shared that skill? Have you passed on that special uniqueness that is your's alone? Every day you have an opportunity to share that Master's touch with someone else. That touch is the gift from God that we must share that just might change the bidding for that one person from disbelief to belief.

Prayer: Our Father and Our God, we thank you for the blessings you have bestowed upon us. So often we come to you asking for more, when we should be thanking you for what we have. Provide for us today, that one moment when we too can share your Love with someone who needs your blessings. Amen.

Jay Bonson

Pray for Rob and Meredith Kendall with Against the Grain. Prayer for the success of their programs and counseling in helping men and women break their cycle of destructive choices. Pray that their clients will come to know Jesus Christ.

JESUS' OWN WITNESS

Thur., March 13, 2014

The man born blind answers repeated questions about the one who opened his eyes:

John 9:10-11 He answered, "The man called Jesus..."

John 9:17 He said, "He is a prophet."

John 9:27 "... Do you also want to become his disciples?"

John 9:33 The man answered ... "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

John 9:37-38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

I recently encountered this story and it made me think about witnessing to unbelievers the way Jesus did. I had to think for some time about the fact that Jesus did not reveal himself to the man he healed as Messiah for some time after the healing took place. In fact, Jesus allows the man to go through a period of intense questioning by his community and leaders, and eventually to be thrown out of his local synagogue before seeking him out again.

However, the man born blind also goes through many steps of faith during this time. He replied first that his healer was "A man called Jesus", then "a prophet", then "from God". He even boldly asks the Pharisees if they want to become his disciples, too! Finally, after all of this difficulty, he meets Jesus again and is ready to confess his belief.

This story has helped me to increase in patience to those I with whom I have shared Christ. Waiting, I sometimes question whether I'm just being lazy and apathetic. Other times, I feel frustrated that they just don't want to know or grow or change. Jesus himself, however, allowed some to go through a time of questioning on their faith journey. Then, he revealed himself fully.

I am encouraged to be patient, as the Lord is patient. I am encouraged to keep believing, learning, and growing in Christ. I'm waiting, so that at the right moment, I can be prepared to give an answer to anyone who may question me about the hope that I have.

Prayer:

Lord- Thank you that you are patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. Please lead us to share the love of Christ with those in our lives when the soil is ready. Please give us patience to allow you to grow the seed, and give us wisdom to know when to bring in the harvest. We give all the glory to you. -Amen

Melissa Rogers

Pray for Debbie Robinson and the staff at Miriam's Promise as they minister to pregnant women who need to have hope and guidance. Pray for women who are in crises about their pregnancy that they will find the services of Miriam's promise.

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

Sun., March 30, 2014

Read Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17

Mark 10:15-16

Truly I tell you, whomever doesn't receive the kingdom of God as a little child, will never enter it! And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

For a number of years, I worked with five year olds. I have often thought of one child. He was the youngest in the class. A terror to his older brother, he was the despair of his parents. None of this was evident at school.

One day he cornered me to talk. "Mrs. Pride, I'll bet God cries a lot". Startled, I asked why? Seriously looking into my eyes, he replied, "cause people are so mean to each other!" Tears suddenly quivered on my eyelids, and I took him into my arms. You are so right, I whispered.

Prayer:

Dear Father, Keep Jesus' words in our hearts, as I will keep a little boys in mine. Listen to the children, I pray. They have a friend in you and in Jesus.

And a little child shall lead them.

Jean Pride

Pray for Roberta Fanelli- Davis and Sweet Sleep as they provide for orphans around the world. Thank God that they hear the voices of children in need. Open your heart to these children.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Sat., March 29, 2014

2 Corinthians 3: 16 -18

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

I know God is always with me. He is faithful. There have been many times in my life when the Holy Spirit has prompted me to act. I sometimes argue with that voice because I just didn't want to do it. I am learning slowly but surely that by acting I am allowing God to act through me, and I am also blessed.

About a year before I was stricken with Bacterial Meningitis. The Holy Spirit told me that I wouldn't be a hair stylist forever. I then tried to figure out what I was supposed to do. Then about a week before I became ill that same voice prompted me to be sure, when taking appointments, to get everyone's telephone numbers. I usually did anyway but I was more diligent about doing so.

We were planning on going to Michigan for a visit, so I thought maybe something was going to happen while we were there to cause us to stay longer. Then the meningitis hit! I could have died according to the Doctor. I should have ended up in a nursing home. Neither happened and as a result the Doctors found I had kidney cancer.

I don't know what God has planned for me to do with the rest of my life. I hope that by me sharing my story it will help build someone else's faith. God let me know through the Holy Spirit that my life would be changing. It has, and I am getting better about listening to God.

I Praise God for not giving up on me and for giving me the Holy Spirit for guidance. Amen

Prayer:

Father, thank you for Your faithfulness. Help us all to "be still and know that You are our God". Help us to see you in all circumstances everyday. Empower us to act when you call. In Your Name, Amen.

Diane McGhan

Pray for Kris and DeeDee Hatchell as they listen for God's call on their lives. Pray for them to be secure in being new parents and in caring for their baby.

SHOWING FAITH THROUGH DEEDS

Fri., March 14, 2014

James 2:14

What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds?

From time to time, I get the opportunity to be an Innkeeper at Room in the Inn. Nothing like getting to hang out with a diverse group of homeless people in the comfort of my own Church (sort of like camping in a hotel).

The first couple of times I did Room in the Inn, I was a little uncomfortable hanging out with homeless people. Seemed a lot easier to just do a world class cleaning job on the kitchen, get to know that other Innkeeper and meet everyone serving dinner. Shame on me for thinking these financially strapped men were something to fear or that they were spiritually poor. I was missing out on all the spiritual feeding that came from getting to know them and hearing their stories.

My best RITI story came from last year. The Page High Cheerleaders served dinner. Must have been about 20 of them. They acted like they had bought tickets to the event. After presenting an impressive devotional on how Christianity works in 10 minutes and then dining with the men, they all split up and sat with each man and spent the next couple of hours listening to each of them tell stories, all the while having the best time. And when asked to do a cheer, they obliged. I learned a lot about what RITI is about that night.

Prayer:

Father, may our deeds reflect our faith. Give us hearts for the homeless to love them as you do.

Randy Eddy

Pray for Nick Haigler as he guides college students in mission and ministry through the ministry of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Alabama.

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Sat., March 15, 2014

Matthew 5: 14; 16

You are the light of the world....let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deed, and praise your Father in heaven

"This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine." I don't know about anyone one else but I have a very hard time just reading this simple little phrase. I'm singing the song as I'm writing this little devotional. I'm instantly transported back in time to when my girls were young and would sing this song at the top of their lungs dancing about the house full of joy.

How is it that children do this so easily and I as an adult have such a hard time with it? I have been giving this a great deal of thought and I have come up with why I struggle with it. When I compare myself to others for whatever reason that is when my light flickers out. I need to be reminded that God has created me to be different so that I can do what God has planned just for me.

God is continually looking for ordinary people who are willing to let Him use them to make a difference in His kingdom. From business executives to bus drivers, from teachers to techies, from stay-at-home moms to musicians, God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways. That includes you and me! I can share a personal story of how God has been using me in a way that I would have never dreamed. I have been working for the past six years with students with dyslexia. I started off with just a desire to learning what dyslexia is and isn't. God has lead me to do so much more than just learn about dyslexia. He has lead me to working with many students and to my surprise going before Tennessee Congress with the hope of getting dyslexia laws passed. Talk about a walk of faith. What I used to view as one of my biggest struggles (my own dyslexia) is now without a doubt a blessing. I'm using my own struggle to do God's good for others.

God never wasted anything. God can use all the positive as well as the negative. He would not give us abilities, interests, talents, gifts, personality, and life experiences unless He intended to use them for His glory. We are the way we are because we were made for a specific contribution. We were designed by God to make a difference for God.

So let your light shine bright. Our light can be enough to ignite someone else's light. Give yourself permission to be the masterpiece you were created to be and let your light shine. It's hard to sing, "This little light of mine, I'm going let it shine," and not be instantly filled with God's joy.

Prayer: Father, empower us to shine your love. Amen

Eileen Miller

Pray for Olivia Evans and the staff at Mountain Top. Pray for God's guidance for them as they select the projects for the youth and adult groups who are coming to the Mountain to serve the people in this area of Appalachia.

FINDING INNER PEACE

Fri., March 28, 2014

It has been my experience that great comfort may be drawn from the 23d Psalm during times of stress. Also, some believe that the Lord God is pleased when his scriptures are prayed to him. One need not be in actual fear of death to pray the 23d Psalm. I have endured the stresses of law school exams and a bar exam, and I am certain that the stresses of the examinations that prospective ministers endure are equally stressful, as are other experiences as varied as military boot camp or being a new arrival on the mission field. The internal stresses experienced may not be apparent to others, and that is a good thing, but a remedy for that inner stress may very well be the inner peace available to you by praying the 23d Psalm back to God, particularly if it is prayed in the poetic language of the King James Version of the bible.

Try it for yourself, memorize it, and keep it in your arsenal of defensive weapons. If you are young enough to be unfamiliar with the KJV, it goes like this:

1The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Roland Preston

Pray for Nick Haigler as he guides college students in seeking their calling in mission. Pray for all the Wesley Foundations in colleges that they can be the place of peace and spiritual blessing that college student's need.

BE THE LIGHT OF JESUS

Thur., March 27, 2014

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him, nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God--- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

As we turn our minds toward missions, I think of times past when James Edward and I traveled the country roads of Giles and Lincoln counties visiting church members in their homes. We often sang together as we rode along. One song, "Send the Light" spoke a message to our hearts. The song may be old fashioned and not sung today. Fifty years have gone by, but the message that Jesus is the light still needs to be told. People are waiting to hear.

Prayer:

Dear God:

You sent your son into the world so that man could know Him and find You. May we share the light and your love to all who will hear. Amen.

Nellie Underwood Elder

Pray that our lives will be transformed by the witness of the missionaries. Pray that God will guide you to your mission in His Name. Pray for Pastor Chip as he leads us in the services during our Mission Impact Celebration. Pray for Bishop McAlilly as he prepares to share with us during our mission weekend. Pray that our conference will be alive in the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit will empower and equip us to be Jesus' disciples in the world today.

BEING CHRIST'S HANDS AND FEET

Sun., March 16, 2014

In Genesis we read that when God created man and woman he exclaimed, "It is very good!".

* Supremely among everything else, God prizes people – the only creatures who possess His image. He treasures our individuality and our diversity-every language, every ethnic group, every culture. His love is so expansive, He died for us all.

Being a follower of Jesus requires cultivating the kind of heart Jesus had for people- especially the poor, the hungry, those without power, those who are victims of injustice. It means extending our love and support regardless of race or culture. It involves building up and extending His church through helping lost people hear about and embrace the good news of the gospel of Christ.

We must be Christ's hands and feet in treasuring all human beings. From "Fully Devoted": John Ortberg

THE PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. AMEN

LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE !!!

GOD IS LOVE

Mon., March 17, 2014

1 Corinthians 13:7

"Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

Working at Lifeway I get a variety of customers. The customers may be incredibly rude or they might be inspiring like this story. Some of you might know that I suffer from serious anxiety problems. One night at work a lady asked for my help. She proceeded to tell me that her son (23) committed suicide in 2012. She kept telling me her story and how she battles with her anxiety and depression everyday. We prayed together and we even cried together. It's not by chance that we met. It's not by chance that she was so open with ME. It's not by chance that we are battling the same thing. The Lord brought us together and showed Himself throughout our conversation. I know that she was sent to Lifeway and sent to me for a reason. The reason isn't always clear to me but I do think it was so I could help her and be the light and hope she needed. Keep your heart open as often as you can so that God can use you to show hope and love to those around you.

GOD IS LOVE

God Bless,
Blake Hastings

Prayer:

Precious Jesus, we thank you that you are always with us and always provide just what we need. Open our hearts and minds to the opportunities around us to minister in Your Name. Keep us sensitive to the needs of others and to love them in Your Name. Amen

Pray for Roberta Fanelli-Davis with Sweet Sleep. Pray that God will continue to motivate His people and the church to care for the orphans in this country and around the world. Pray that God would open our eyes to know where we fit into alleviating the orphan crises.

SEEING GOD'S MIRACLES

Wed., March 26, 2014

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me".

God's Miracles are all around us... You just need to stop and look to find them... The very thought that you are alive today and well is a perfect example... Often, we find ourselves in the position where our lives have some difficult turns, whether it be medical or emotional... But the beauty of all of this, is our loving God is there for us. We just need to pray to Him and ask for His Holy Guidance through it all.

One such time, recently, stands out in my mind. My husband was facing a rather delicate, new heart surgery. The doctor had not done very many of these procedures and my husband would, definitely, be in the grouping of the 1st ten that this doctor had done... Yes, it was a scary situation... Not many had even heard of this surgery... No one knew what to expect or what the outcome might be... Everyone just prayed that it would be successful. Without this surgery, there would be no other procedure to help with his heart.... We prayed about it and realized that God would get us through this and after all, He was surely, the one who had opened the door of opportunity for us to take... We went to the Hospital and my husband was prepped for surgery... One of the doctors came in and explained some of the things that could possibly happen, to prepare us, in the event of something occurring. I became a little unnerved... Now I knew in my heart that God was going to get us through this and He would certainly, work through the surgeon's hands, but, still, felt a bit uneasy... I closed my eyes, and prayed that God would send me the strength and help me to overcome this anxiety I was feeling... You know what? He did just that... He whispered to me... "I am your God... I am your way... I am your truth... and I am your light! In your darkness, I am shining... I am your God!" I held on to these words... and felt such a wave of security and love surrounding me... It was not long until the doctor came to talk with us and told us the surgery was very successful and my husband would be fine... He really was, too! He was, originally, supposed to be in ICU for 48 hours, but was out in 24 and was able to leave the hospital on the 3rd day! He is doing great and I am so thankful that we have such a loving, caring God, who watches over us all the time and never leaves us! I have since, taken these words, and with God's help, have written a song. It is my way of sharing His Love with others.

Prayer: Dear gracious and Almighty Father, we thank you for loving us in such a powerful way, that, just your Love can climb the highest mountain or cross the deepest of seas, to bring us peace and comfort. Thank you for getting us through all of our "trials and tribulations", that only You can do! Amen

Perhaps, you have a need for the power of God's Love to surround you... Just reach out to Him and ask for His help... Believe in His power and grace and it will be there, for you, too!

Teresa Locke

Pray for Debbie Robinson and the staff at Miriam's Promise as they guide pregnant women in providing for and caring for their babies. Enable these women to make right decisions for their babies.

HEARING OUR CALLING

Tue., March 25, 2014

Read Psalm 139:7-18

Psalm 139:7 and 18

Where can I go from your Spirit or where can I flee from your presence? Your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Through high school, I was active in my youth group in the church. We had contact with missionaries and neighborhood workers. I entered college across the street with the idea of going overseas.

Then my first quarter at college, I met a young Marine who had just returned from China. As we got to know one another, I was praying hard asking God what I should do? My fear of any transportation over water came to mind, as well as my plan to work with young children somewhere.

And so, I kept several things: the Marine, my love of missions, and young children (both ours and others!).

It is a joy to have Epworth involved in missions: enabling, encouraging, and entering in!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for being there, opening pathways of service for us. Help us to use them to bring the Good News all around the world. Amen

James 2:26

Faith without works is dead.

Jean Pride

Pray for an open heart to God's calling for you. Pray for Kris and DeeDee Hatchell as they parent their son, Noah. Pray that God will use them in their every day to share the love of Jesus with others.

WE STINK!

Tue., March 18, 2014

2 Corinthians 2:14-15

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

As we prepared for our mission trip to Tanzania in 2008, we were warned about the strong body odor of the African people we would be working with. Well, nothing could have prepared my tender nose for the assault of the unaccustomed smell. I am ashamed to admit that I was repulsed to the point of nausea. Then the learning began. When you have to walk a mile to a dirty river just to get water for cooking, daily baths are not an option. When you only have 2 sets of clothes, one for church and one for the rest of the week you aren't going to have that Downey-fresh appeal. When all of your cooking is done over wood or charcoal in an unventilated hut, the smoke will permeate your very pores. In the dry season, everything is covered with red dust and in the rainy season everything is covered with red mud. A funny thing happened. As we fell in love with these gracious, gentle people, the odor became an acceptable characteristic - not offensive at all. After 3 weeks, we probably didn't smell too great either! In fact, when we reminisce now years later, someone from our group inevitably brings up a longing for the smell of Africa.

Our sin is like a foul odor to God. He is repulsed by it. But a funny thing happened. He sent Jesus to live with us with our dirt and cover us with love. He gave his life that we could be clean and dressed in the clothes of righteousness. As forgiven people, we are now fragrant as a rose.

As we enter into our celebration and renewal time with the MIC, please pray for the people of Africa. Pray for the homeless in Nashville. Pray for the poor of Appalachia. Pray for the smelly, the ragged, and the unlovable. Pray that we will recognize our own stinky behaviors – selfishness, greed, complacency, hypocrisy - and ask for the cleansing forgiveness that allows us to love and be loved.

Cindy Kurzrock

Pray for Tom Orme and the mission, Vision for Chile. Pray for the mission to help children and young adults to have productive lives free of fear. Pray that they will come to know Jesus Christ through the staff and volunteers of Vision for Chile.

LISTENING TO JESUS

Wed., March 19, 2014

John 8:36

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

John 10:27

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

This is what Jesus would say: Listen to Me continually. I have much to communicate to you, so many people and situations in need of prayer. I am training you to set your mind on Me more and more, tuning out distractions through the help of my Spirit. Walk with Me in holy trust, responding to My initiatives rather than trying to make things fit your plans. I died to set you free, and that includes freedom from compulsive planning. When your mind spins with a multitude of thoughts, you cannot hear My voice. A mind preoccupied with planning pays homage to the idol of control. Turn from this idolatry back to Me. Listen to Me and live abundantly!

These are great words to live by!

Carol Lindberg

Prayer:

Counselor, Mighty God, Loving Shepherd: empower me, by your Holy Spirit, to hear you as you call me to serve others in Your Name. Amen

Pray that God will transform our hearts as we listen for His call on our lives. Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to us through our missionaries as they share their call. Pray that we will have obedient hearts to follow Jesus without hesitation. Pray for the United Methodist Church Global Missions as they provide for people all over the world to improve health, quality of life, and the love of Jesus Christ.

WELCOMING STRANGERS IN JESUS' NAME

Mon., March 24, 2014

Matthew 25: 35....I was a stranger and you welcomed Me...

About four years ago Epworth began assisting Hope Rise International, which seeks to help refugees assimilate and become independent members of American society. While we are no longer formally involved with this organization, I continue to meet with a small group of Bhutanese ladies who are studying to become American citizens. They are still learning English, but their interest and enthusiasm to learn all they can about America is inspiring! They are warm, gracious and hospitable. They have shared their food and family celebrations with me. When we talk about American holidays, I can tell them why we celebrate Christmas and Easter. Teaching them has been a learning experience for me.

When we welcome strangers, whether from other countries or from down the street, we are welcoming Jesus. I am thankful that our Faith Promise offerings have given me the opportunity to meet and get to know these beautiful ladies, and welcome them to our country.

Prayer:

Lord, help us to recognize You in the people we meet, and to treat them as we would want to be treated. Amen.

Kathy Heard

Pray for open hearts and minds to hear Jesus' calling. Pray that He will guide you to your special mission he has planned for you. Pray for Olivia Evans as she follows God's calling in her mission at Mountain Top. Pray for her preparation as she comes to share with us during our mission weekend.

LOVING CHILDREN

Sun., March 23, 2014

1 John 3:1

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

I love Project Transformation and the way you as a volunteer are changed by the sweetness of the children you get to listen to. Everyone may know what happens. We went to downtown Nashville the first year and then last year to Antioch United Methodist to listen the children read. It is literally one morning a week or more. The first year we had mostly children who have grown up here. At Antioch we had Burmese and Hispanic children, some with issues with speaking English, some with very good English. Their bright, beautiful faces remind me of my grandchildren. They all are really trying to read either words, sentences, or letters. The idea is for the children not to lose their place in reading over the summer. Also, the idea is to integrate the church into the community and to help college age young adults run these programs and decide if this is a career for them. This is a win-win-win-win. The children win because they will be better prepared for school and they get to have childcare. We win because there is nothing more thrilling than seeing young minds at work unless it is seeing young adults gain real responsibility and maybe see a career path. The light bulb that went on when my five-year old Burmese girl got "ice cream" was exciting. Did I mention that you as a volunteer get to go to a church you may not know? The main thing is getting to know Christians you would otherwise never interface with. "Suffer the little children to come unto me." We actually can be Jesus to these precious young people.

Prayer:

Dear Father, help me to be Jesus' hands and feet as we transform lives and are transformed. Amen

Maggie Mefford

Pray for children who need hope and love. Pray for Against the Grain as they work to restore families through their programs. Pray for Rob and Meredith Kendall as they lovingly work to provide the Against the Grain ministries.

COME HOLY SPIRIT

Thur., March 20, 2014

Acts 2: 1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Jesus you sent your disciples out two by two,
They were given a task that seemed impossible to accomplish.

But you assured them that no matter what; Your Spirit's power would accomplish even greater things.

Is it possible, Lord, that we, weak and frail as we are, are also able to do great things for you by the Holy Spirit's power?

If so, Lord, we ask you for the power of your Holy Spirit to come with tongues of fire into our hearts and souls.

Come, Lord, and soon!

Ken Miles

Pray for the orphans all over the world, that they will have care, love, food, clothing, and hope. Pray for Sweet Sleep as they provide beds and love to these orphans in the name of Jesus. Pray for Roberta Fanelli-Davis as she shares with us her calling and mission with Sweet Sleep.

SHARING APPLE CAKE, CHARACTER, & CHRIST
Fri., March 21, 2014

I was blessed to grow up on our Family Centennial Farm with 3 present generations working the 'Cooper-Family-Business', and even more blessed with a nurturing Grandmother, widowed at age 50 spending her remaining years tending the sick by visitation and the dead by grooming the cemetery. She was nanny to her Grands and Great-Grands and cooked for everyone who enjoyed comfort-food, often taking her famous apple cake and homemade bread on her regular visitations. She loved to entertain by showing her small stack of quilts and thumbing through photo albums identifying family members long passed on... After Bruce & I were married and independent she came by regularly with Apple Cake. One day I asked her why she gave so much away, knowing her modest income and simple lifestyle. She answered, "I'm not giving you cake, but sharing it." Gramma Cooper taught me to quilt, cook, garden, and to love God and Family; shaping and defining the best part of my life... but most of all teaching me to share.

Paul's Words from:

Titus 2 & 3 ~~~" teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live ... to teach what is good. Then they can train younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, and be kind ... so that no one will malign the word of God..." "to say 'NO' to ungodliness and worldly passions; to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives ..., while we wait for the blessed hope ... of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness; to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." because "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved... But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the ...the Holy Spirit ... so by His grace have hope of eternal life."~~~

Prayer:

Thank you God for Gramma Cooper teaching me her fine art of sharing... and for preparing and empowering Peacemaking-Clemmie Greenlee and those at Blue Monarch nurturing those not having a Titus-elder to share grace and hope of eternal life thru Christ Jesus.

Marianne Cooper Richards

P.S.: I'll share Gramma's Apple cake recipe with anyone who asks. It's delicious!

Pray for Tom Orme as he works with young women at the House of Hope in Chile. Pray for financial provision and for many to volunteer to go and serve in short term missions in Chile.

"DOING MISSION" OR "BEING MISSIONAL"?
Sat., March 22, 2014

1 John 3:16-18

16 This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 But if a person has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need and that person doesn't care—how can the love of God remain in him?

18 Little children, let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth.

What is the difference between "doing mission" and "being missional"?

"Doing mission" is something that we schedule on our calendar such as a mission trip. Don't misunderstand the point here, doing mission is not a bad thing, but if we're striving for Missional Excellence, we have to set the bar much higher.

"Being Missional" expects a deeper commitment.

This commitment pushes us from seeing mission as something we do to mission becoming who we are. Being missional calls us to love others as Christ loves. It calls us to see our neighbors as ourselves. Being missional places us face to face with opportunities to bring Christ to a hurting world. Being missional opens our eyes, our minds, and our hearts to those in need. Being missional pushes us to seek a life in which no one is without the other. Being missional compels us to constantly ask the questions:

Who's missing?

Who's hurting?

Who does not know the extent of God's love?

May you live in such a way that the love you're receiving from Jesus Christ is poured out upon those you encounter each day. When you do, you will experience Missional Excellence.

Brad Fiscus

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Pray for Bishop McAlilly as he guides our conference and spiritual leaders to be in mission in Jesus' name. Pray for the United Methodist Church's missions.