

wesleyan life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

**ASK.
SEEK.
KNOCK.**

*An Invitation
to Pray*
LUKE 11:9



An invitation to Pray

Believers asking, seeking, knocking *and listening* to the Holy Spirit formed The Wesleyan Church (TWC) in 1968. Differing opinions, priorities and practices, and distinct personalities came together, bowed in obedience, to determine the purpose and beliefs still guiding our mission today.

Wesleyans remain a praying people — a Spirit-led, praying movement — called to evangelize and make disciples of all people.

This issue of “Wesleyan Life” is dedicated to prayer. It’s theme, “An Invitation to Pray,” embodies God’s desire for us to pray and reinforces the truth that our prayers are essential for our shared mission to succeed.

In the following articles, Wesleyan authors address various prayer topics: theology, purpose, invitations, testimonies and written prayers. Our hope, by giving voice to God’s invitation to pray, is to stir within you a fresh desire and greater movement toward prayer so we, as Wesleyans, may live as holy people on mission in our world.

Your prayers are coveted for the 15th General Conference (15thGC) of The Wesleyan Church, May 17-20, 2026. The conference theme, “Empowered,” reminds us that the same Holy Spirit’s empowering of Jesus’ disciples recorded in Acts exists for and within us today. Be watching in spring 2026 for “EMPOWERED: A 15th General Conference Prayer Initiative,” a 30-day digital prayer resource that will guide us in prayer leading up to General Conference.

General Superintendent Wayne Schmidt says, “I often reflect on the fact that between Jesus’ promise in Acts 1:8 and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment in Acts 2 the disciples prayed. Jesus’ promise and the Holy Spirit’s power are constant, as should be our prayers.”

Jesus commands us today, his disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit, to go and make disciples in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Our mission remains incomplete.

We have a standing invitation from God to pray, and confidence drawn from Scripture and personal experience that he will answer. May our trust in the Lord guide and align us as we together serve the world for his glory and the fulfillment of his mission. 🙌



JANELLE VERNON

is the general secretary and executive director of the Communication and Administration of The Wesleyan Church and publisher of Wesleyan Publishing House.

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15th

GENERAL CONFERENCE of THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

The 15th General Conference is happening **May 17-20, 2026**, in Marion, Indiana! Join us as we pray to be **EMPOWERED** by the Holy Spirit to **BOLDLY** embrace the call of Acts 1:8.



Visit: WESLEYAN.ORG/15THGC for more information.

wesleyan life

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Ask, seek, *knock*

I come from a family where you don't ask people for things. It makes you feel indebted, like you owe them something. We just don't want that hanging over our heads. To this day, I don't like free stuff. I'd rather pay for something than be given it.

As a result, you can imagine that I used to struggle with the concept of grace. Many of us are wired to try to earn favor with God — which of course isn't even possible. We are wired to feel like God is upset at us. When I'm about to go through the airport's international Customs, my wife always warns me to take my guilty face off. It's my natural look.

If you're like me, it can take some time — maybe years — for it to sink in that God not only loves us, but he also likes us. He wants to give us good things. He's not the proverbial cowboy god waiting for an excuse to blow you away. God wants to give you good things. And, yes, discipline is a good thing for us when we need it. It helps get us back on a path that is actually best for us. We should ultimately be grateful for it, as unpleasant as it may seem.

Luke 11:10-11 make all this very clear. Good parents give good gifts to their children. If your boy is hungry and starving for some fish, you don't hand him a snake. You don't give a scorpion to your daughter when she has asked for an egg. Humans aren't even righteous by nature, and we do that much.

“

Prayer was never meant
to revolve around our
desires. It's about *joining*
God in his purposes.”

Pide, busca, *llama*

Vengo de una familia en la que no se le pide cosas a la gente. Te hace sentir en deuda, como si les debieras algo. Simplemente no queremos tener esa carga encima. Hasta el día de hoy, no me gustan las cosas gratis. Prefiero pagar por algo que recibirlo como regalo.

Como resultado, puedes imaginar que solía tener dificultades con el concepto de la gracia. Muchos de nosotros estamos programados para tratar de ganarnos el favor de Dios, lo cual ni siquiera es posible. Estamos programados para sentir que Dios está molesto con nosotros. Cuando estoy a punto de pasar por la aduana internacional del aeropuerto, mi esposa siempre me advierte que me quite la cara de culpable. Es mi expresión natural.

Si eres como yo, puede que te tome tiempo, quizás años, asimilar que Dios no solo nos ama, sino que también le agradamos. Él quiere darnos cosas buenas. Dios no es ese Dios justiciero, que está esperando cualquier excusa para castigarte. Dios quiere darte cosas buenas. Y sí, la disciplina es algo bueno para nosotros cuando la necesitamos. Nos ayuda a regresar al camino que realmente es el mejor para nosotros. En última instancia, deberíamos estar agradecidos por ella, por desagradable que parezca.

Lucas 11:10-11 deja todo esto muy claro. Los buenos padres dan buenos regalos a sus hijos. Si tu hijo tiene hambre y te pide pescado, no le das una serpiente. No le das un escorpión a tu hija cuando te ha pedido un huevo. Los humanos ni siquiera somos justos por naturaleza, y aun así hacemos eso.

Así que puedes imaginar cuánto más Dios, el Padre perfecto, quiere darnos cosas buenas. “Toda buena dádiva y toda perfecta bendición” provienen de Dios (Santiago 1:17). Podemos entenderlo con la mente, pero muchos de nosotros necesitamos sentirlo en lo más profundo.

Si estás en este extremo del espectro humano, necesitas escuchar estos versículos: “Pidan y se les dará; busquen y encontrarán” (Lucas 11:9). El griego usa aquí el tiempo presente. No es algo de una sola vez. Es algo que debemos hacer continuamente, reconociendo nuestra dependencia constante de Dios. Continúa pidiendo. Continúa buscando. Continúa llamando. Dios responderá.

Por supuesto, no todos luchan con este extremo.



Lukewarm*

*Never

Just like you're never lukewarm in your faith, we're unwavering when it comes to serving ministries like yours. It's what drives us to keep problem solving for Christian organizations every day. By working with us, you get the expertise and heart behind insurance and services that equip you to keep sharing the love of Jesus with others.



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So, you can imagine how much God — the perfect Father — wants to give us good things. “Every good and perfect gift” comes from God (James 1:17). We can know this with our heads, but many of us need to feel it in our bones.

If you're on this side of the human extreme, you need to hear these verses! “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9). The Greek uses the present tense here. It's not a one-time thing. It's something we should be doing in an ongoing way, recognizing our never-ending dependence on God. Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. God will answer.

Of course, not everyone struggles with this extreme. Unlike those who see God as a twisted sheriff, others see him as a cosmic ATM that grants our every wish. For them, the danger is taking God's goodness for granted. They are more prone to struggle when God does not grant their every whim and fancy. “Doesn't it say ask and you will get? What's going on here?”

1 John 5:14 is extremely helpful in this regard. It clarifies that if we ask anything, “according to his will,” he will hear us. John 15:7 similarly gives the condition that receiving is based on remaining in Christ. “Remain in me,” Jesus says, and his words will be in us. Then when we ask, we know we will receive because we are sharing *his* words.

This arrangement may feel like a catch-22 to a person whose life is centered on themselves. However, prayer was never meant to revolve around our desires. It's about joining God in his purposes. “What? You mean I only receive if I am in sync with God's will?” Yes. That's how it works.

It's a reminder that God and Christ must always be the focus. We are not. For most of history, this fact was probably painfully obvious. But in our self-centered



A diferencia de quienes ven a Dios como un comandante autoritario, otros lo ven como el genio de la lámpara que concede todos nuestros deseos. Para ellos, el peligro es dar por sentada la bondad de Dios. Son más propensos a frustrarse cuando Dios no concede todos sus caprichos y deseos. “¿Acaso no dice que pidamos y recibiremos? ¿Qué está pasando aquí?”



La oración nunca fue diseñada para girar en torno a nuestros deseos. Se trata de *unirnos* a los propósitos de Dios.”

1 Juan 5:14 es de gran ayuda en este sentido. Aclara que, si pedimos algo “conforme a Su voluntad”, Él nos escucha. Juan 15:7 establece la condición de que recibir depende de permanecer en Cristo. “Permanezcan en mí”, dice Jesús, y Sus palabras permanecerán en nosotros. Entonces, cuando pidamos, sabremos que recibiremos porque estamos compartiendo *Sus* palabras.

Este arreglo puede parecer una contradicción para una persona cuya vida está centrada en sí misma. Sin embargo, la oración nunca fue diseñada para girar en torno a nuestros deseos. Se trata de unirnos a los propósitos de Dios. “¿Qué? ¿Quieres decir que solo recibo si estoy en sintonía con la voluntad de Dios?” Sí. Así es como funciona.

Es un recordatorio de que Dios y Cristo deben ser siempre el enfoque. Nosotros no lo somos. Durante la mayor parte de la historia, este hecho probablemente era dolorosamente obvio. Pero en nuestro contexto moderno y egocéntrico, es fácil pensar que *nosotros* somos el enfoque. Puede que ni siquiera nos demos cuenta de que nuestras vidas están orientadas de esa manera. Una persona egocéntrica suele ser la última en enterarse de que lo es.

La buena noticia es que, si realmente estamos rendidos a Dios, nuestros valores se alinearán con los suyos. A medida que reconocemos Su carácter en las Escrituras, nos volveremos cada vez más como Él. A medida que comprendamos más profundamente su amor por nosotros, nos volveremos más amorosos tanto hacia Él como hacia los demás, incluyendo nuestros enemigos. Cuanto más nos parezcamos a Él,

modern context, it is easy to think that *we* are the focus. We may not even realize that our lives are oriented in that way. A self-focused person is often the last person to realize that they are self-centered.

The good news is that if we are truly surrendered to God, our values will align with him. As we recognize his character in Scripture, we will become more and more like him. As we increasingly understand his love for us, we will become more and more loving both toward him and others — including our enemies. The more we are like him, the more our requests will align with his will. We will ask in his name because we truly want everything to be for his glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).

Luke 11 gives the example of someone who pesters his neighbor until he finally gives him what he needs. It's reminiscent of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8. The point is not that God must be bugged if you want to get anything out of him. The point is that God isn't like that. God's bias is to give us what we ask because he loves us.

What we need the most is the Holy Spirit. The passage ends in Luke 11:13 with God's promise to give us the Holy Spirit. God *never* will deny anyone his Holy Spirit if we genuinely ask. What a tremendous gift — better than a fish or an egg for sure! The Holy Spirit will not only supply our needs, but he will be with us through times of sorrow or suffering, give us the words to say, guide us to the truth and show us when we turn the wrong way.

So, **ASK!** Wouldn't it be unfortunate if there were gifts we didn't receive from the Lord because we never asked? **SEEK!** How many treasures might we find if only we let the Holy Spirit guide us to them? **KNOCK!** If the door doesn't open, it's because it isn't God's best will for us or the kingdom. Yet you can rest assured that if we are listening, God will lead us to doors he is delighted to open. 🌿



KEN SCHENCK
is provost of Campus Edu, adjunct professor for several Wesleyan colleges, author and ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church.

más se alinearán nuestras peticiones con Su voluntad. Pediremos en Su nombre porque realmente deseamos que todo sea para Su gloria (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).

Lucas 11 da el ejemplo de alguien que fastidia a su vecino hasta que finalmente le da lo que necesita. Es similar a la viuda persistente en Lucas 18:1-8. El punto no es que haya que fastidiar a Dios si queremos que nos dé algo. El punto es que Dios no es así. La naturaleza de Dios es darnos lo que pedimos porque nos ama.

Lo que más necesitamos es al Espíritu Santo. El pasaje en Lucas 11:13 concluye con la promesa de Dios de darnos al Espíritu Santo. Dios *nunca* le negará Su Espíritu Santo a quien lo pida sinceramente. ¡Qué regalo tan maravilloso, sin duda mejor que un pez o un huevo! El Espíritu Santo no solo suplirá nuestras necesidades, sino que estará con nosotros en tiempos de tristeza o sufrimiento, nos dará las palabras que debemos decir, nos guiará a la verdad y nos mostrará cuando nos desviamos del camino correcto.

Así que, **¡PIDE!** ¿No sería lamentable que hubiera regalos que no recibimos del Señor simplemente porque nunca los pedimos? **¡BUSCA!** ¿Cuántos tesoros podríamos encontrar si tan solo permitiéramos que el Espíritu Santo nos guiara hacia ellos? **¡LLAMA!** Si la puerta no se abre, es porque no es la mejor voluntad de Dios para nosotros o para Su reino. Pero puedes estar seguro de que, si escuchamos con atención, Dios nos guiará hacia las puertas que Él se complace en abrir. 🌿



STUDENT TESTIMONIAL REV. BELINDA SELFRIDGE

Wesley Seminary helps me pursue my Doctorate of Ministry while continuing God's calling in my current context. I've particularly enjoyed the on-site classes where we dig in deeper to the course content and have rich conversations.

Through prayer, devotions, and worship together, lifelong friendships have been kindled. In my ministry project, I'm working on an initiative that will improve pastoral care. Throughout my journey at Wesley Seminary, I've often been able to utilize my projects in practical ways that impact those I serve.

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I know a man

“God’s command to ‘pray without ceasing’ is founded on the necessity we have of His grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air. Whether we think of or speak to God, whether we act or suffer for Him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than His love, and the desire of pleasing Him.”

JOHN WESLEY,
“A Plain Account of
Christian Perfection”

I know a man who was asked to take a walk with the Lord. And the man said yes. Then the man asked the Lord, “Where are we going?” And the Lord said, “Do you trust me?” And the man said, “Yes. Absolutely.” The Lord said, “We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.” The man took a minute, then he asked the Lord, “How long a trip is this?” And the Lord laughed and said, “I don’t tell anybody that, but we have today. Ready?” And the man said, “Let’s go.” The Lord had chosen to allow the man to walk a path that

involved a rare and aggressive illness for which there is no known cure. Along the early part of this walk, the man heard his specialist say, “You need to understand, this is what will take you out.” And the man heard the Lord whisper to him,

“You also need to understand, you’re going to be all right.”



Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy is a gathering of holiness denominations that is committed to advancing Christ’s Kingdom by **engaging, empowering, and equipping women to lead in the Church** at every level - from women just sensing a call to ministry to those fully ordained.

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The man knew both of them knew what they were talking about, and he trusted them, because he knew they both had his best interests at heart.

And by the wonders of modern medicine, the active grace of God, healthy choices and the prayers of his friends, they are fighting this illness to a standstill, so far.

Now the man has never been what some would call “a Great Man of Prayer.” He just wasn’t wired to be a fireball. He was more of a slow burn kind of man. He was a man of constant prayer, just not boisterous prayer. Being an introvert by temperament, he lived life inside his head. So he was in constant conversation with the Lord — all the time. And the Lord missed no opportunity, through his Holy Spirit and his Word, to teach the man how he should pray.

“
The *power*
of *prayer* is a real
part of that part of
our existence that is
more real than what
we see.”

As the word got out about the new path the man was now walking, the Lord brought close friends around him to encourage him and pray for him. Everywhere the man went, his friends constantly told him, “I’m praying for you.” At a conference, an author friend spoke strong words of declaration into his life. A seminary president, a seminary professor, a missionary and several pastors tracked him down as a group, laid hands on him, anointed him with oil and prayed powerfully for him. Three young pastor friends pulled him aside and prayed the glory down! Others assured him, some in tears, that they were praying for him.

A former church member found him at another conference and prayed a sweet prayer of thanksgiving over him. At the end of a seminar session he and his son led,

a leader called the group to pray on his behalf. The leader told the group not to gather in close because of the man’s compromised immune system, but the man said, “Why not?” So, they crowded around him and cried out to heaven for his healing.

And that has never stopped.

People in his local Wesleyan church are constantly assuring him that they are praying for him. And they mean it.

Some of his most cherished words of encouragement have been, “I’m praying for you, Papaw!”

The man has had friends boldly declare his healing, declaring that Satan has no dominion here and disease has no right to be here. And the man received this gladly.

The man also had a friend declare, “I am praying for your complete healing.” The man asked his friend to back that down a couple of notches, because that doesn’t happen until we get to the other side! “We don’t want to rush things.”

Through all of this, here is what the man I know is learning about prayer.

First, the power of prayer is a real part of that part of our existence that is more real than what we see.

Second, every prayer we pray is answered, just like every child’s request is answered. The answer may be “yes” or it may be “no.” It may be “wait.” It may be “not this but that.” Or it may be “this and that,” and a bunch more things you never asked for! It is our job to pray humbly in faith. It is the Lord’s job to answer according to his wisdom and his will — his good, perfect and pleasing will.

Third, prayer is a process that brings growth and maturity to the one praying and transformation to

the one for whom we pray. By being faithful in our conversations with the Lord, we learn to discern the mind of Christ for our circumstances, and for the needs of others. Through the prayer of faith, a person in one place can be used to see a miracle in the life of another person in a distant part of the world. Surely, if you can talk to them on your phone and be heard, you can talk to heaven about them and be assured you are heard.

Perhaps the best thing the man has learned about prayer is this: he has learned to put everything else aside and to simply pray ...

“I want what you want.”



DAN LEROY

is a retired Wesleyan minister. He served as a pastor, church planter, district superintendent and member of the General Board of The Wesleyan Church.





Story



Father,
God in heaven,

I lift our senior leaders up to you. First, I want to thank you for giving them hearts to love you and your people. God, I thank you for their willingness to sacrifice their time and will for yours. Thank you for the steadfast and diligent effort they have put into serving your kingdom. Thank you for the standard and the example that they have set with their posture of true and genuine worship to you, Father.

Thank you for their willingness to train and equip the next generation of leaders. God, I thank you for the lessons that they have learned through blood, sweat and tears. Through sleepless nights and hours of prayer, they learned how to navigate leading and loving your church. Now, they share that experience with a younger generation that needs it. Thank you for the humility you have given our senior leaders ... the wisdom, strength and endurance to continue to run the race.

Now, Lord, I pray that you would remind them that in you they are never “finished.” That even as they are shifting their view, responsibilities and roles to equip new leaders to step up, you are continuously calling them to service in the body of Christ. Lord, would you instruct, lead and guide them in the next steps of their ministry — whatever that may be.

God, I pray for grace and peace over each senior leader as they entrust your church to the next generation.

In the mighty name of Jesus
I pray, Amen. 🙏

THEO BOLDEN is lead pastor of NEWLIFE Church, La Plata, Maryland

Prayers for the senior generation

Lord Jesus,
We stand in awe of the generations who have gone before us — those who have carried the flame of faith with courage, endurance and devotion. As they extend their hands to pass the torch, we receive it with reverence and humility.

Lord, reassure them that the fire they have tended ever so faithfully will not be extinguished. The church they have loved, led and long sacrificed for is not theirs to carry alone — it has and forever will be yours. And as they entrust the future into those that follow in the wake of their lead, may they do so with peace, knowing that your faithfulness and their commitment to you has prepared the way for generations to come. May they see, even now, the fruit of their labor in the lives they have touched and the leaders they have shaped.

And for us who now bear this great responsibility, grant us wisdom to listen, courage to lead and a steadfast heart to remain faithful to your mission. May we honor their legacy, not by preserving the past unchanged, but by building upon it with the same love for your kingdom that they have faithfully demonstrated.

Bless them, Lord, in this sacred transition. Let them know they are not forgotten, their work is not finished, and their impact will echo for generations to come.

It's because of you and for you Jesus that we pray this. Amen. 🙏



TORREY MARTIN is university pastor at Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

FATHER,

Thank you for the pastors who are transitioning, whether through retirement or simply handing over the ministry they've left to their successor. Thank you for the grace you've given them all these years to serve so faithfully and the renewal you've given them in this new season.

We're grateful for their voice. May they continue to rely on you in letting go of the past seasons. I pray they will remain steadfast as you walk with them through this chapter of their lives. We honor the impact they've made and will continue to make in their personal lives and for the kingdom.

I pray for the confused pastor, who may be asking, “What do I do now?” Lord, show them that their life, giftings and the unique way you have wired them to provide encouragement and support to the church is still needed. May the wisdom they carry from you flow into mentorship for new pastors. I ask that the new leaders glean from their knowledge and past experiences, and that they would be propelled farther than those who came before them.

Lord, for the leaders who are in an unsure season of transitioning, help them realize everything they do matters. From the texts of encouragement to intercession on someone's behalf, their encouragement, grace and presence matter to you.

I pray for each pastor in their distinct seasons. May they know they are seen, heard, and deeply known by God. Help them to “flourish like a palm tree ... grow like a cedar of Lebanon,” to be “planted in the house of the Lord,” and “flourish in the courts of our God.” May they “still bear fruit in old age ... proclaiming, ‘The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him’” (Psalm 92:12-15).

I ask all of this in Jesus' name, amen. 🙏



MOë DIGGS is senior pastor of Healing Place Church in Waldorf, Maryland.



Seeking God

When Samir started attending Crosspoint Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, he was committed to Islam.

"I always wanted a relationship with God," Samir said. Raised as a Muslim in Alexandria, Egypt, he'd always had a lot of questions about God. He wanted a religion that combined faith and understanding. But he found that many Muslims around him were wary of his curiosity.

“
Why can't we ask those questions?”

Samir said. "If God allowed me and my brain, that he created, to go to that extent ... he wants me to understand what I'm believing."

Samir moved to the U.S. when he was 15. In high school, he made two friends who became strong influences in his life — both of whom happened to be Christ followers. They began sharing their faith with Samir in different ways.

"We had many conversations about God and what we believe," Samir said.

A few years later, Samir met Emily, who is now his wife. Emily grew up in Crosspoint and became Samir's first link to the church.

"I didn't have any family around," Samir said. Seeing the community Emily had access to, "I kind of envied that." So, he encouraged Emily to go to church with her family and joined her there — more so he could meet her family than desiring to participate, though he still had many questions about faith and religion.

For a while, Samir visited Crosspoint on and off out of curiosity. Emily's father, Dale

Carson, grew into a major figure in his life, although their relationship had a rocky start. Samir's continued Muslim faith was a source of deep concern for Emily's family. When Samir and Emily decided to get married, Samir went to church to get Dale's permission.

"When I asked him," Samir shared, "he said, 'You're a great guy. I love you. Got nothing against you, but I can't bless this marriage.'" Dale had many conversations with the couple to express his disapproval and try to persuade them that they needed a united relationship with God.

Despite that tension, however, Dale showed deep love for Samir and Emily. To Samir, whose relationship with his own father had never been strong, Dale's example was powerful. "I saw how he was as a parent, how he was as a husband, how he was as a friend, you know, and a man of God, too. He just lived the gospel."

After marrying Emily, Samir continued attending Crosspoint when he wasn't too busy with work. His two close high school friends go to Crosspoint, and over the years, Samir often discussed theology with them and Crosspoint's pastors.

As time passed, Samir noticed something. "For four years before I even came to Christ ... I don't know what it was. It was like a heavy stone on my heart ... I'm not even joking, I thought many times that I even have some heart problems, and I went to a doctor."

Seeking relief, Samir turned to prayer. "Every morning I asked, please, God, show me the way," he said.

He wrestled with the different faith models he'd seen in his life from Muslim family members and

“
Every morning I asked, *please*, God, show me the way”

Christian friends. "I felt Islam was needing to keep a scorebook with you," Samir related, "the more I do good, the more points I would get with God to get to heaven ... Our relationship with God should not, it cannot be like that."

Years passed without a breakthrough for Samir's heavy heart. Sadly, his father-in-law, Dale, passed away in November 2021 while Samir still followed Islam.

But on a cold January afternoon in 2023, Samir sat alone in his food truck, which Dale had built with him before passing. Business was slow. "My wife sent me a four-minute or three-minute clip," Samir said. The video was an explanation of the Trinity by Nabeel Qureshi.

Some time before, one of Samir's longtime friends had given him a copy of Qureshi's book "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus," but he hadn't gotten around to reading it. The video was his introduction to Qureshi, and as he watched, the idea of the Trinity finally clicked.

Suddenly, he had a new question. "What if this is true?" Right away, he wanted to speak with someone from Crosspoint. "I got to the point where I was scared to leave the truck, because if I die right now and I'm not on the right track, what will really happen?"

That night, the friend who'd given him Qureshi's book listened for over three hours while Samir

processed. He began to see all the ways God had worked in his life up to that point. A few days later, Samir met with Crosspoint's executive pastor, Glen Robinson, and committed his life to Jesus.

Ten years had passed since he started attending Crosspoint as a Muslim. While he still had a lot of uncertainties, Samir was sure about one thing: "This is a God I want to worship. The God with unconditional love, the God that served me before I even thought about serving him."

Crosspoint's lead pastor, Josh Ratliff, shared, "He wanted to be baptized right away." Baptism was a bold step for Samir, whose mother and sisters were still following Islam.

"He went through with his baptism thinking he could lose everything on that side of the family," Pastor Josh said. "But what he found was that God was faithful and had prepared the hearts of his family."

The church continues to pray for Samir's relatives in Egypt, who have now heard his story and were more accepting of his choice to follow Jesus than he expected.

Samir is grateful for the people God surrounded him with throughout his journey to Christ. He recommends Dale's approach to sharing about Jesus with nonbelievers: "Love them unconditionally. Show them what you believe in versus telling them about it." 🌿



JERAH WINN is a writer for The Wesleyan Church.



A 15th General Conference Prayer Initiative

“I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God’s creational intentions.”

JOHN WESLEY, “HOW TO PRAY: THE BEST OF JOHN WESLEY ON PRAYER.”

The Wesleyan Church (TWC) is a Spirit-led, praying movement called to evangelize and make disciples of all people. Like Wesley, we desire a revival of holiness and a Holy Spirit empowerment to fulfill God’s purpose and mission. One important step in preparing ourselves to be agents of God’s mission in the world is prayer. For TWC to be empowered for God’s calling, we need to pray.

This spring (2026) TWC’s General Board and Communication and Administration team invite you to join them in prayer for the 2026 General Conference. “EMPOWERED: A 15th General Conference Prayer Initiative” will be made available as a digital resource to help guide TWC in unified prayer leading up to the 15th General Conference (15thGC). Scriptures, devotionals, prayer prompts and written prayers by TWC’s General Board and leadership will focus our thinking, guide our preparations and invite the Holy Spirit’s empowerment for God’s mission to be accomplished in and movement through the church.

On these pages is a taste of the upcoming 30-day prayer initiative. We encourage not only your participation but ask that you invite others to join as well.

As we approach the 15th General Conference (15thGC) at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana, on May 17-20, 2026, let’s prepare our hearts as one body with one voice calling out to our ONE LORD in focused prayer for the work of the General Conference and our mission. Let’s begin praying together now:

Lord, we are yours.

Our **CHURCH**, who we are and hope to become do not belong to us.

We give ourselves, our callings and plans with open hands solely to you.

We confess that we are people in need of you.

On our own, we cannot be the holy people you are calling us to be.

In your faithfulness, show us what needs to change in us and give us repentant hearts.

We surrender to your desires and ourselves to you so we might walk in the light of your hope and holiness.

Our **CALLING** is not our own.

We give it freely back to you.

We see only in part, but you see the whole.

Help our minds to be shaped and refocused by you.

Open our eyes so we may see your mission and vision more clearly.

Make us your holy people.

Our **JOURNEY** is not our own.

It belongs to you.

We surrender what we have in mind, and will trust you to show us the next right thing.

Give us discernment and guide our steps.

Empower us to follow in your ways.

Lord, we are yours — your church, called by you and journeying with you.

Reignite us with your holy fire.

Make us, The Wesleyan Church, a holiness movement for your honor and glory.

Amen. 🙏



ANGELA ALVARADO

is the assistant editor for the Communication and Administration Division of The Wesleyan Church, an ordained elder and graduate of Wesley Seminary, Marion, Indiana.

Prayer Guide Sample One

PRAYER FOCUS: For delegates to vote God’s will on every General Conference memorial.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:1-2

... but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God. (v. 2, NRSV)

! DOWNLOAD YOUR PRAYER GUIDE AND EXPLORE ALL THINGS RELATED TO 15THGC. wesleyan.org/15thGC

PRAYER PROMPT: Lord, transform our hearts and minds so that only your will prevails.

Lord, 14 times Wesleyans have gathered at General Conference to seek your good and acceptable and perfect will for The Wesleyan Church. Fourteen times, you have been faithful.

We humbly ask you to guide us again as we prepare for and gather at the 15th General Conference of The Wesleyan Church. Prompt us to pray for the outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon every aspect of the memorial

process. This gathering will be futile without your presence and leading.

Thank you for Wesleyans from across the North American General Conference who have added input to the shaping of draft memorials for the 15th General Conference. May every word in every memorial be formed under the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

Thank you for the input from district superintendents informing General Board members responsible for

recommending memorials to the 15th General Conference. May every memorial-related conversation reflect your will and no other’s agenda.

Thank you for the delegates seeking to discern your will when voting for memorials that better equip The Wesleyan Church to fulfill its mission. We pray you grant us wisdom, grace, courage, peace, joy and fortitude as the policies guiding our local, district and General Church ministries are decided.

Our lives are dedicated to fulfilling your will for The Wesleyan Church. May that dedication be reflected in the memorials approved at General Conference. Amen.



Janelle Vernon

Prayer Guide Sample Two

PRAYER FOCUS: For The Wesleyan Church to boldly live as a holiness movement in our day and time.

SCRIPTURE: John 17:15-19
Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
(v. 17, NRSV)

PRAYER PROMPT: God, sanctify us, The Wesleyan Church, for the world. And begin your work in me.

Wesleyans are fond of the word “sanctification,” even if we rarely use it. But if you ask what it means, the answers fall in every direction. Most will say something about being “set apart,” implying a distance of sorts between us and the world.

But in the middle of his prayer, Jesus uses the term three times and his meaning is something quite different. Jesus speaks of being sanctified for the world,

not from it: “I am not asking you to take them out of the world ... I have sent them into the world, sanctify them (there) in the truth” (vv. 15-17a). The sanctification Jesus prays for is both social and spiritual, set apart without being removed. It’s to live as Christ for the world.

Historically we’ve swayed from one to the other; first being too removed, then being too familiar with the world. Wherever you think we’re at now, please begin to pray for

more. As we move toward the General Conference, ask God to give us a new imagination for the world. Pray that we’ll dream of something bigger than ourselves, want more ourselves than better performers and bigger congregations. Pray for our churches to love this world even though they belong to another. Pray that our people will once again be called, “the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD ... the Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted”

(Isaiah 62:12). Ask that we rise and “rebuild the ancient ruins” of our cities, repairing broken walls and restoring the streets with dwellings.

What has Jesus prayed for or God has promised that seems hard to believe anymore? Pray for it anyway.



Steve DeNeff

! DOWNLOAD YOUR PRAYER GUIDE AND EXPLORE ALL THINGS RELATED TO 15THGC.
wesleyan.org/15thGC

18

83

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What kind of impact will you make when your career becomes your mission field?

Matthew 28:18-19

Live Fearlessly

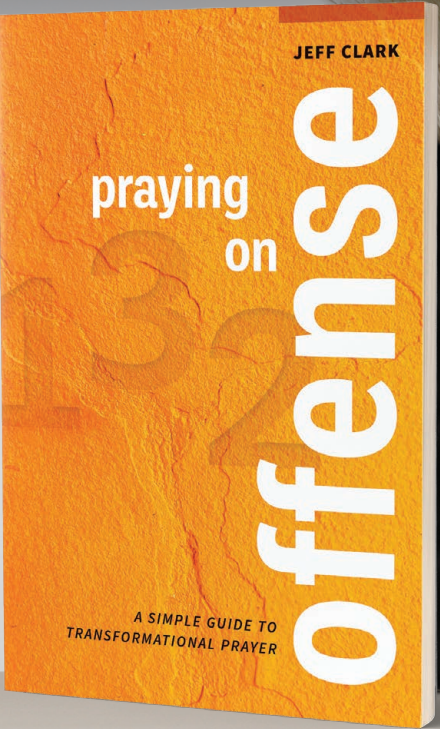
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A healing prayer:

When the Holy Spirit interrupts

RESPONDING TO THE
INVITATION



“

What if they decided to *pray* for this young boy and he wasn't healed?”

Thadd, Calvary's director of Worship and Creative Arts, reflected on the moment he learned about Jessica's request. It's not unusual for staff to receive prayer requests on Sundays and at first this request felt routine. Thadd listened and planned to tell the staff later so they could pray throughout the week. However, “Something shifted, and I just knew, this has to happen today.”

As Thadd described this decision, he recalled one of Pastor Caleb's favorite expressions: “The worst thing we can do is stay on track.”

Reassured by this cultural value, Thadd stepped off track. He quickly decided to interrupt the service with this prayer request, all along reminding himself, “This is why we are here. We can interrupt this.”

From there, Thadd worked with the tech teams to get the message to Caleb who was already delivering the sermon. Pastor Caleb describes looking at the monitor and reading, “Pray for Jeffrey.” Without hearing that morning's conversations, Pastor Caleb, too, went off track and added prayer time to the service.

“I was just thinking, what are we doing? I'm preaching a message from Luke 14 where someone is healed. Jesus tells us to pray for healing,” Pastor Caleb explained. “So, we're going to pray for healing.”

March 3, 2024, at Calvary Wesleyan Church in Harrington, Delaware, started out like any other Sunday. The staff unlocked the doors and turned on the lights. There was a sound check and prayer time. Nothing out of the ordinary. “It was a normal, good Sunday morning,” Pastor Caleb Dunn recalled.

The morning's events stayed on course well into the first service, that is until a staff member encountered one family's deep need and the Holy Spirit's unexpected invitation. During the first service, Worship Leader Thadd George's wife told him a young mother, Jessica Kemp, had

come hoping Pastor Caleb would pray for her son, Jeffrey.

Earlier that week, six-year-old Jeffrey had been diagnosed with stage 4, diffuse large B-cell lymphoma — a cancer in the lymphatic system.¹ And in Jessica's words, the week “had been a nightmare.” Jessica shared, “I went from having two healthy kids to being told my son was sick, and I was fearing losing my son.” Five specialists looked at the pathology and confirmed the diagnosis.

So, Jessica had come to church, ready to ask for prayer. She went on, “I just wanted to reach the Lord so bad.”

¹ “What is diffuse large B-cell lymphoma?” Cleveland Clinic (2025, June 2), <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24405-diffuse-large-b-cell-lymphoma>.

NEXT

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERNSHIPS FOR *young adults*

CZECH REPUBLIC
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CENTRAL EUROPE

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These seemingly straightforward decisions were not without risk. At the time, Pastor Caleb had only been lead pastor for a little over a year. He'd just completed a succession process and was following Pastor Ken Figgs, a well-loved leader who had been serving Calvary for 20 years. The staff was new. And like nearly every believer, Pastor Caleb and Thadd could recall their own painful stories of unanswered prayer. What if they decided to pray for this young boy and he wasn't healed?

While there are clear commands and examples of how to pray for healing in Scripture, not every healing prayer is answered. In fact, the Bible records instances where people in need of healing don't receive it. The Apostle Paul prayed for healing from "the thorn in his flesh," an ailment that never resolved this side of heaven (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Believers like Timothy, who suffered from stomach ailments, and Trophimus, who is left "sick at Miletus" in 1 Timothy 4, and is not healed by Paul who had successfully prayed for healing for countless others.²

Despite this knowledge and their experiences, both Pastor Caleb and Thadd responded in obedience to the Holy Spirit's prompting. In Caleb's words, they decided to "take Jesus at his word," following the practice of healing prayer as described in James 5.

At the sermon's conclusion, Pastor Caleb announced the church was going to pray for Jeffrey. His mother, Jessica, went to get him from children's ministry as the congregation silently waited. When they walked into the sanctuary, Pastor Caleb invited them on stage. The mood in the room was reverent yet weighty. As Jessica reached center-stage, this loving mother fell to her knees and began to weep, with Jeffery standing at her side.

At that moment, nearly the whole congregation came forward and laid hands on them. Some came on stage, others stood reaching their hands forward. No one had invited them to come. But in unison, the congregation responded to the needs of a mother and son and the Holy Spirit's prompting.

"There were more people around the stage than there were in their seats," Pastor Caleb recalled. Together they prayed in agreement for Jeffrey's healing.

After the prayer Pastor Caleb dismissed the service and everyone went home. Jeffrey's pathology was

“
God had
performed
a miracle!”



sent to the National Cancer Institute. No one heard any news for several days. Then the results came back. There was no sign of cancer.

"The Lord answered my prayers and healed my baby!" Jessica exclaims.

When this healing story was shared with the church two weeks later, four people from Calvary were baptized. God had performed a miracle! This was over a year ago, and as Jessica describes, today her son is "happy, thriving and most of all healthy."

While it's not clear why God decided to move in a special way at Calvary that ordinary March morning, that Sunday's events bolstered a community's faith and pointed to a kingdom and power beyond that which we can see. When describing this healing, Pastor Caleb summarized it beautifully, "All healing that we see is a foreshadowing, an anticipation. It's a sign of the reality in which all things will be brought to Jesus." Earthly healings aren't meant to lead to eternal life on earth but rather to demonstrate the reality of an eternal kingdom.

Pastor Caleb went on, "Healing needs to be celebrated because it's the assurance that the people who aren't healed on this earth are ultimately healed. If God's able to do it now, he'll be able to do it then." 🕊



JUSTINE TEGEN is an ordained minister, resource specialist and administrative assistant within Church Multiplication and Discipleship in The Wesleyan Church.

² Deere, J., "Does god promise healing to all?" Seedbed, (2020, May 4), <https://seedbed.com/does-god-promise-healing-to-all>.



Story



Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to you on behalf of the generation that is advancing behind us. Thank you for them, for their youthful zeal and compassion, for the promise of their potential.

I ask you to bless them with your peace. Amid tumultuous times, I pray they will remember, as Paul told the Ephesians, that you are our peace.

I pray you will give them wisdom to navigate these days in which the world is not always friendly to people of faith. May they always look to your Word as the source of wisdom.

Help them develop and continue the habit of reading and studying your Word regularly. May they find in it the direction they need, encouragement for their lives, promises for their circumstances and truth to apply to daily situations. We know your Spirit wants to guide us into truth, so when culture tries to assault them with its deceptive philosophy, teach them to rely on your Word as the final authority.

May they also remember to pray without ceasing. May prayer be their first response instead of their last resort. Teach them that prayer is not a ritual, but a lifestyle of communication with you. May it become as natural to talk to you as it is to breathe.

Teach them to worship you and learn to fear the Lord, not in trembling anxiety, but in awestruck wonder. May this wonder bring them into a spirit of adoration and a sense of your presence.

When they face adversity, help them to face it with courage. When they suffer loss, help them to focus not on what they have lost but on what they have left.

May they set their sights on heaven, even as they remember their earthly responsibilities.

We ask all these things in your blessed Name . Amen. 🙏

RON MCCLUNG

is an author, speaker and retired Wesleyan minister.



Father, I thank you that prayer crosses the span of time ... days, weeks, generations.

Thank you that each generation desires to find new ways to demonstrate their faith. May they ask, "Does this extend the kingdom of Christ? Will my community be changed by my living, my loving?"

May they embrace your Word, allowing it to guide each step they take.

May they focus on prayer. The agonizing times on their knees. The prayer breathed on the way to a crucial conversation. The silent prayer in the middle of a face-to-face encounter.

Father, help them to pursue justice. Lead them to those who are oppressed. May they be willing to go to those who are in bondage. Help them to be present for those who feel they have no value. May they never lose sight of the people around them — those who need their Jesus-centered influence and care.

Anoint, equip and encourage those who seek to bring down walls that have divided, hindered and misrepresented the gospel message, to welcome the stranger, encounter the woman at the well, take the message everywhere.

Call them to focus on the person of Jesus Christ. Teach them, through the unfolding days of their lives, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly, fulfilling God's requirement as written by his prophet Micah, and fleshed out in the life of Jesus, who stood in the synagogue declaring that he had come as the perfect demonstration of that sacrificial life.

Father, may integrity be as an unbreakable thread, woven through all that they do and are. It will set them apart as Christ-followers to be emulated.

And Father, give them a heart of gratitude that holds appreciation for anything good that we left them ... and a heart of forgiveness for our failures.

In the name of Jesus, amen. 🙏

JOAN RAMPEY is a wife, mother, mother-in-law and Nana enjoying the retired life in South Carolina.

Father Dear

It is with profound thanks and deep praise that I offer an intercessory prayer for this rising generation of young leaders. I am compelled, however, to first offer thanks and praise for the intercessory prayers offered on my behalf when I was part of the rising generation of young leaders.

With frequency and intensity that only you would fully know and understand, my godly mother interceded in prayer on my behalf over many years. Without any doubt, the trajectory of my life and ministry have been greatly impacted by those prayers in ways I cannot measure or fathom. For this incredible blessing, I once again express my deepest thanks to you.

I offer this prayer with joy in my heart for this next generation of leaders that have signed on, sold out and saddled up. I pray that they will have wisdom to grasp that care must be exercised in defending the trappings of our heritage so that the Faith doesn't become shriveled and lose vitality. May wisdom in equal measure be given to exercise care in the passion to repackage the Faith and present it in new and culturally relevant ways so that it doesn't become diluted and lose vitality. Help our rising generation to fully grasp that they are the generation of "trustworthy people" that Paul spoke about and to whom the Faith has now been handed. I ask that this generation pass it on intact, undamaged and undiminished to others who will, in turn, pass it on to those who follow.

Father, I plead that they may have courage in equal measure to wisdom, for courage without wisdom often leads to polarization while wisdom without courage can lead to stagnation. May this equal measure be present in this rising generation of young leaders.

Thank you, Father Dear, for hearing this prayer from an old man's heart. Amen. 🙏



H. C. WILSON is a General Superintendent Emeritus of The Wesleyan Church.

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Remembered

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” *(Hebrews 13:7)*

REV. DAVID KEITH ANDERSON (68) died January 28. He pastored in the Crossroads District.

REV. WILLIAM C. BABB, JR. (102) died April 10. He pastored in the Crossroads District.

REV. ROOSEVELT THEODORE BENSON (96) died April 6. He pastored in the Atlantic District.



DR. DONALD LAWRENCE BRAY (82) died September 10, 2025. He served as a missionary and general director of World Mission (now Global Partners) and pastored in the Florida District.

REV. JAMES BUCKLES died April 17. He pastored in the Crossroads District.

REV. MELONIE BETH BUHLER (59) died May 30. She pastored in the Kentucky-Tennessee District.

REV. AMBROSE CLIFFORD (A. C.) CLEMENS (99) died April 17. He pastored in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

REV. WILBUR COATES (100) died February 28. He pastored in Florida and Missouri and served as assistant district superintendent in the Florida District.

REV. RICHARD LEE COLE (71) died April 9. He pastored in the Crossroads District.

REV. CHARLES NORMAN DEDERICK (84) died on February 20. He pastored in the Crossroads District.



REV. PAUL DIETER (92) died March 23. He pastored in Maryland and served as the Chesapeake District superintendent.

REV. FOSTER GENTRY (89) died April 22. He pastored in the South Carolina District.

REV. KEE HAN died February 10. He pastored in the Great Lakes Region.

REV. TOMMY HANKS (90) died May 15. He pastored in Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio and Tennessee.

REV. HORACE HUDGINS (91) died May 18. He pastored in the Kentucky-Tennessee District.

REV. ROBERT GREGORY JACKSON (63) died May 5. He pastored in the Shenandoah District.

PASTOR STEVEN CHRIS LATTIMER (68) died July 11. He pastored in the North Carolina West District.

REV. WAYNE MAHONEY (87) died July 8. He pastored in Indiana and Kentucky.

REV. JOHN F. MCELHINNEY (95) died on February 15. He pastored in the Atlantic District.

REV. MATTHEW D. MILLER (71) died July 16. He pastored in Michigan and Indiana.

REV. PAUL SAMUEL PHILLIPPE (95) died March 26. He pastored in Connecticut and New York, and served as a missionary to Brazil and Guyana, South America.

REV. WILLIAM GLENN RAINEY (77) died June 25. He pastored in the South Coastal District.

REV. DWIGHT ROLLE died May 28. He pastored in the Florida District.



DR. JERRY ROTT (83) died March 24. He pastored in Montana, Wisconsin and Wyoming and served as the Florida District superintendent.



DR. JOE C. SAWYER (100) died May 16. He served as district superintendent of the former Illinois, Northern Illinois, Oklahoma, Southern Illinois and Texas districts, and general secretary of Extension and Evangelism, Evangelism and Church Growth, and Church Multiplication and Discipleship for The Wesleyan Church.

REV. JULIUS KNUTE STRAND (92) died February 12. He pastored in the Northwest District.

REV. KELLY TOTH (91) died June 24. He pastored in Canada and North Carolina and served as a missionary to Japan.

REV. DALE JOEL VAN METER (96) died June 27. He pastored in Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota.

VISIT [WESLEYAN.ORG/REMEMBERED](https://wesleyan.org/remembered) TO READ A FULL LIST OF OBITUARIES.

Events

The following are events designed to equip and inspire The Wesleyan Church. Visit each link to learn more about how you can increase your faith, knowledge and well-being.

2025

2025 EMPOWERED TOUR

2025 EMPOWERED TOUR

FOLLOW regional events to help empower the next generation and their leaders.

DETAILS
wes.life/empowered25

2025

side by side

PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

A month dedicated to showing love and appreciation for pastors.

DETAILS
wes.life/PAM

2025

MOSAIX 2025

MOSAIX

A multiethnic church conference.

DETAILS
wes.life/mosaix

2026

παροικαλέω parakaileo

E2026

A Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy conference.

DETAILS
womenclergyconference.com

2026

EXPONENTIAL

EXPONENTIAL 2026

A gathering for kingdom multipliers from around the world.

DETAILS
wes.life/exponential

VISIT WESLEYAN.ORG/EVENTS

TO SEE ALL EVENTS.

News

- GLOBAL
- GENERAL
- COLLEGE

153RD SESSION OF GENERAL BOARD CONVENES WITH 15TH GENERAL CONFERENCE IN VIEW

Prayer, flexibility and partnership are key in preparing for the May 2026 General Conference.

FULL STORY
wes.life/153rdGB

WHAT IS FREEDOM FOR?

For the believer, freedom is a tenet of discipleship.

FULL STORY
wes.life/freedom

Hanging onto Hope: When a dream dies

FULL STORY
wes.life/HotHdream

ALL Called: A reflection on Ephesians 4:1-16

FULL STORY
wes.life/ALLcalled

Hanging onto Hope: When the world is at war

FULL STORY
wes.life/HotHwar

Spectacle and submission: John Wesley's trailblazing ministry

FULL STORY
wes.life/trailblazing

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THE MULTIPLIER MULTIPLIER MULTIPLIER IN YOU

MULTIPLIERS CONFERENCE

MARCH 17-19, 2026 - ORLANDO, FLORIDA

FREE WESLEYAN SHOULDER EVENTS

For Ticketed Guests

WESLEYAN PRECONFERENCE

Tuesday, March 17 - 8:30am

MULTIPLIERS' PARTY

Tuesday, March 17 - 6:00pm

REGISTER TODAY:
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CHURCH MULTIPLICATION
COLLECTIVE