

Monday, January 8, 2024

Today, we pray for godly leadership in the Free Methodist Church in Canada and the choosing of a New Bishop.



David Anointed by Samuel, Dura Synagogue, 3rd C. AD. Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 1-2 (NIV):

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: Is there anyone I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward, or disregard? If so, what am I doing about?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

Today, we are praying for the selection of the next Bishop of the Free Methodist Church in Canada. This leader will be chosen from among the ordained ministers of our denomination. We also look around our local church– from the nursery, to the youth room, to the pews on Sunday morning and ask: who will be next, and then after that and then after that? Who is your church equipping to be a future leader in our denomination? Pray and ask God to call to mind someone from your congregation you can encourage as a potential ordained or lay leader in the FMCIc.

Dear Lord, today I pray for _____ as a potential future leader in our denomination. I am asking...

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on episcopal leadership.

Today, we thank **Bishop Cliff** for his service to the Free Methodist Church in Canada. Spend some time as you are able to pray for his encouragement of body and soul, and discernment as he listens for how God will call him forward in his life's work.

We also want to pray for the **BOA** and the **BLTF** as they are guiding the process of Bishop selection: for their wisdom, clarity, and obedience to God's direction.

Finally, we pray for the **Next Bishop**. May they guide us in the "doctrine, spirit, and discipline" of the Methodist movement. *Sit before the Lord and consider: what trait is he asking you to pray over within the character of this faithful overseer?* If you need a prompt, read through the words found in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, even multiple times throughout this day. What word is coming to you from this passage as a prayer prompt for our future leader?

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, in your wisdom you appoint and anoint leaders for the service of your church. May our next Bishop be a person in passionate pursuit of holiness and one who can lead us on with grace, healing, and vision, calling us to remember what a faithful God has done, is doing, and will do into the future of the Free Methodist Church in Canada. Amen.

Tuesday January 9, 2024

Today, we pray to God for a thrusting forth of workers into the harvest fields of the FMCiC.



Parable of the Sower, from the Story of Christ by Georg Pencz (1534-35), public domain

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 3-6 (NIV):

*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight
so that you are proved right when you
speak
and justified when you judge.
Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother
conceived me.
Surely you desire truth in the inner
parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost
place.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

Today, we are praying for workers for our local churches. Our congregations are served by the gifts and graces of both those called to be clergy and those called to be lay leaders. Your church might have an abundance of leadership. Give thanks. Your church might be struggling with responses to the invitation to service. Pray and ask the Lord for courageous and willing hearts. Many times, we allow either feelings of inadequacy, fear, and/or pride to prevent our stepping forth in leadership. How might these feelings affect your availability for service? How are you serving your local church? Who are you empowering and encouraging in the leadership of your congregation?

Dear Lord, today I pray for _____ as a leader or potential ministry leader of my local church. May they be encouraged by.....

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on developing our local and denominational leaders.

Today, we thank God for our **Retired Ministers**, may their lives of service continue to challenge and inspire us to face the harvest field and may they feel noticed, named, and nurtured. We are also grateful for those who work to encourage their fellow labourers through **network leadership**.

We also want to pray for the work of **MeGAP** in developing our emerging clergy leadership. May they have discernment and wisdom in cultivating leaders committed to holiness of heart and life. And may your Holy Spirit be at work in selecting the next **director of Leadership Development**.

Then, we turn our hearts towards **our churches in transition**. May they be encouraged and strengthened for mission as they sow seeds in their community in the absence of pastoral leadership. May you raise up a pastor to share in their harvest field.

Finally, we look to the Lord to sustain and bless the leadership of intercultural and international ministries through the work of the **Intercultural Engagement and International Child Care ministries**.

Father, Son, and Spirit, we look to you and ask that the harvest field you have gifted to the FMCiC not be found in want of labourers. May you break the fear and pride that would prevent us from being fully equipped for the sowing and the reaping of the fruit of a great awakening in this land. Amen.

Wednesday January 10, 2024

Today, we pray for the cultivation of generosity and wise stewardship as part of the ethos of the Free Methodist Church in Canada.



Parable of the Talents or Minas, by Willem de Poorter (17th Century) Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 7-8 (NIV):

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be
clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: Do I pray about the money I spend?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

Today, we are praying for the growth of giving hearts as part of the ethos of the FMCiC. As such, we also want to pray for this to begin in the beliefs and practices of the local church. Would you consider your local congregation to be a generous church? Why or why not? How has your church lived generously with each other and with our broader community in the past year? Do you support as you are able to ministries of our denomination through core giving or other gifts of talents and resources? We also must examine our own hearts and how we have participated (or not) in this stewardship of resources. Is the Lord pleased with our use of money and time resources or are there points for personal conviction? How can we cultivate hearts of good and faithful servants that model a discerning use of resources to the next generation?

Dear Lord, today I pray for financial wisdom for my local church. Open our eyes to ministries we might support or projects of generosity that we might undertake to bring glory to your name such as.....

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on generosity and stewardship.

Today, we think of **Deva Ratnam** and his oversight of the financial and administrative services of the Free Methodist Church in Canada. We pray for God's wisdom and discernment to be over him and those who work with him in sustaining the financial health of our denomination and encouraging wise use of our monetary gifts.

We also want to pray for the **Communications** team, over all of their work, but today, specifically in the area of promoting engagement on what it means to be a giving people.

Finally, we pray for continued growth as wise servants who have used our talents well. For further reflection, you may read through Matthew 25:14-30 once or throughout this day. What stands out to you in this story and what is God saying to you through it? Which servant are you? Which servant is the FMCiC? How is God asking you to pray over this topic?

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in your grace, you have extended so many resources to us of time, talents, and money- individually, and collectively as your church. We pray that you would multiply the value of these resources through our commitment to using them collectively for your glory. Give us wisdom and courage to envision how we can be full of gratitude in putting these gifts together to grow your Kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Today, we pray for a continued and renewed commitment to live out the biblical vision for human relationships in the Free Methodist Church in Canada.



Return of the Prodigal Son, by Rembrandt (1668)

Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 10-11 (NIV):

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: Did the Bible live in me today? Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

What does it mean to live out the biblical ethic in our relationships with each other? This is a question we ask as Christ followers in our families and in our churches, while the world is watching. Centered on the wisdom found in Scripture, we seek to live in covenant relationships centered around a marriage between a man and wife or a commitment to celibate life. We may look around our churches and consider how we are encouraging others in our congregation in the path to which God has led them. How is our congregation supporting both married and single (through choice or circumstance) members and adherents? Do both groups feel loved and welcomed? What about our pastors? Are we praying over their marriages and asking God's protection on their children? If they are unmarried, are we treating them with equal dignity and respect? If they are journeying through spousal loss how are we holding them up?

Dear Lord, today we pray over the families represented by our church, in all stages of marriage or singleness. We pray for our pastor and the leaders of our church especially, may their homes be filled with.....

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on how we witness to the communities around us about God's design for human relationships.

Today, we think of the **Study Commission on Doctrine**. May they have wisdom in interpreting Scripture and shaping our doctrine in all matters, including our theology of the body and human sexuality.

We also want to pray for the **teams and task forces of the FMCiC** that they may be guided by a desire to uphold and promote the dignity of all persons while encouraging the vision for right relationships outlined in God's Word.

We seek God's blessing over the upcoming **Dying Well project**, that as a denomination we can begin to cultivate greater care and emphasis on addressing bereavement and grief as an inevitable reality of family life. May we acknowledge our need to be aware of the needs of those living in difficult seasons of loss and transition and begin to care for them as a means of grace.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we know that you have created us for community. We pray that the Free Methodist Church would be a family of churches that present a powerful witness to the beauty of both marriage and celibate living. We ask your blessing over us as we seek to model covenantal relationships in a faithless age, and care for those who need healing and grace in the midst of bereavement, estrangement, and family loss. Amen.

Friday, January 12, 2024

Today, we pray for healthy churches in the Free Methodist Church in Canada, committed to growing in holiness.



The Pentecost by follower of Bernard van Orley (1530) Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 12-15 (NIV):

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you.
Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
Oh Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: Am I enjoying prayer?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

From new church plants to congregations that are well over a century into their existence, the FMCiC holds a wealth of different demographic and cultural experience. We may be a rural congregation or an urban congregation. We might be a large body of members or a small group of faithful. Yet no matter our physical makeup, our hearts can be unified around a common pursuit of holiness of heart and life. What is the ministry and mission of your local congregation for the year ahead? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your church when it comes to the prayer life of your body? How can your church become or continue on its building project of becoming a house of prayer?

Dear Lord, today we ask your blessing over the prayer ministries of our congregation. We pray that you would give us a vision for prayer by...

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on how we can cultivate healthy churches committed to prayer and discipleship.

Today, we pray for the new ministry of **Jervis Djokoto** as he encourages the work of developing healthy churches in our denomination.

We pray for our **established churches** and our **church plants**, that dynamic connections would be formed to encourage mutual growth and flourishing of all our congregations.

May we also hold up **our chaplains** and those who serve in other para-church ministries. May their faith be encouraged for mission by the love and support of their local church.

We pray for a **spirit of evangelism** to move in the FMCiC, and that we would be emboldened by the knowledge of God's prevenient grace, already at work in the hearts and souls around us.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank you for the way you have been at work in the FMCiC for a very long time. No matter their size, age, or location, may all of our congregations be committed in the year ahead to the ministries of prayer and a humble posture of seeking your grace and mercy upon us as we are about your mission in our families, our communities, and our world.

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Today, we pray for the next generation of leaders and laity that you will raise up to lead the Free Methodist Church into the future.



Christ Feeding the Multitude, Coptic Icon (Unknown) Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, we prepare our hearts.

Let us pray the words of Psalm 51: 16-19 (NIV):

*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.*

*In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.*

*Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

Second, we examine our relationships for sins of omission and commission.

The members of John Wesley's Holy Club would ask themselves 22 questions of self-examination for growth in holiness and grace. Each day this week, we will prayerfully consider one of these questions in pursuing right relationships in our homes, churches, and communities:

Today, we ask: Can I be trusted?

Third, we surrender to God our local churches.

Each of our congregations in the FMCiC represents a different blend of ages and stages of life. Does your local church seek to dignify and empower for mission each member and adherent from the nursery to the seniors group? If your congregation is blessed with children and youth, how are you mentoring them in faith and including them in worship? If your congregation is blessed with an abundance of elders, how are you drawing on their wisdom and example of godly life? What generations might be missing from your congregation? How can you pray into that? While certain age groups might be underrepresented in your church, how are you ministering to those in those brackets amongst your friends, families, and communities?

Dear Lord, today we ask your bless us with a vision for how our congregation can more actively engage all ages in the ministry and mission of our church. Today, I want to pray particularly for...

Finally, we lift before the Lord the needs of our denomination, today focusing on how we can better become multi-generational and build up all ages for lives of holiness on mission.

Today, we pray for **our parents and grandparents**, as they nurture the roots of faith in their children in a culture that runs contrary to the gospel.

We pray for **our children and youth ministry leaders**, as they partner with families to encourage spiritual formation in our youngest members and mentor our future leaders.

May we also hold up **our affiliated camps** as they promote the truth of transformation and the hope of salvation in their ministries to our children and youth.

We pray for a **denominational vision for prioritizing family ministries** and for churches that come alongside those in their congregations needing parenting wisdom and mentorship.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank you for the variety of ages and stages of life that are present in our churches as part of the FMCiC. We pray for a raising up of a next generation of leaders, both clergy and laity for our local congregations and our denomination as a whole. We thank you for the gift of our elders and we pray that we would become even more committed to mutual encouragement and faith transference to our children and youth.