

Devotionals: 29 - 31 October – 1 – 4 November 2023

Almighty God, we are in awe of your magnificent power displayed through the entire universe, for through you all things were made and all things have their being. We come before you with grateful thanks and with hearts that long to adore you and worship only you. Lord, may we know the presence of the Holy Spirit here with us today. May we be open to your leading, sensitive to you speaking and alert to your calling. Father, we invite the same power that was at work when Jesus was raised from the grave to be present with us here now. Lord, we declare that you are welcome here amongst us. Amen.

In churches that are reaching unchurched people, there are always going to be issues of unity. Because they reach across ethnic, political, economic, and cultural boundaries, we have to wade through numerous uncomfortable clashes. When the early church in Corinth faced such issues, Paul told them to “be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.”

We don’t become united by magically starting to agree on everything. Paul doesn’t write 1 Corinthians to settle all the arguments. He doesn’t even say, “People, let me come and settle all these disagreements, and then you can be unified.” No, he says, “Be of the same understanding and same conviction.” Paul means, “Be of the same understanding and same conviction about the Gospel.” Have the same conviction about the superiority of the gospel and its importance over secondary things.

For Paul, unity is not uniformity, where everybody in the church agrees on everything. That’s not the biblical vision of the church. The New Testament church is a place where Jesus is so large that it makes disagreement on secondary things less important.

One of the biggest disappointments of 2020 was witnessing how many believers were willing to walk away from their church over a relatively small disagreement—at least small considering the Gospel and in light of eternity. If pastors said too much or too little on a cultural issue, people left. Longtime members that had married and raised their children in the church suddenly walked away because of where the leadership stood on masks, vaccines, or political decisions. It was amazing to see people who say they hated culture warring; abandon their church over disagreements on things that are small in light of the Gospel.

For Paul, unity is also not relativism, where you say that everyone is right about everything. There are right and wrong approaches to many things. The question is the importance we give these things in our fellowship. Do we have the same conviction about the Gospel and understanding of its importance?

Finally, unity is not sentimentality, where we paper over divisions, never talk about them, and just smile for the camera. Many churches seem to want diversity to be a snapshot of the stage, because that looks good, but they never do life together. And those outside the majority never seem to find themselves in positions of influence.

Paul’s vision of unity is of real people, with different perspectives and preferences, who find a larger, uniting hope in Jesus. Unity is having the same conviction about the gospel and the same understanding about its importance, and then attempting to think about everything else in line with that. We may have a lot of perspectives and preferences that are important to us, but none of them are as important as someone’s soul. The church will only be able to cut through the noise and find clarity in who it is and where it is going when it makes Christ the sole priority and finds its identity in Him.

Lord, let our memory provide no shelter for grievance against each other.

Lord, let our heart provide no harbor for hatred of each other.

Lord, let our tongue be no accomplice in the judgment of another. - Celtic Daily Prayer

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER –

YOU'RE NOT ALONE, LET US PRAY WITH YOU & FOR YOU

PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED

- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** had brain surgery to remove a tumor on 26 October 2023. Our hope and prayer are for a successful surgery and a speedy recovery; especially healing from the Epileptic seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers, and support. Consistent prayers for Mr. Pat and the Family as they care for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: **Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Bro. Bob Krell** is rooted in our hearts and prayers as we shower him and the Family with our love, care, and support. Bro. Bob is at home. He will be receiving in-home care to build up his strength. The Family is grateful for all your prayers and support. We continue to pray for Bro. Bob's healing, restoration, and strength. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Michael Cahoon**, son of Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Mr. Mike has completed his second round of chemotherapy. As Believers, we know prayer is the most powerful action you can take for loved ones facing health challenges. Don't hold back; let us pray without ceasing: "Let your love be close to Mr. Mike today. Let your presence fill him with faith and hope, knowing that your miraculous power and amazing grace is greater than any cancer or health issue; God is with Mr. Mike as he continues to fight the good fight. The odds are overwhelming; but loving God gives me hope. The opponent (cancer) was powerful; God gave me strength. I felt alone in the struggle; God gave me a team. I felt like a stranger; God sent cheering supporters. I felt confused; God showed me the game plan. I felt defeated; God's Words inspired me. I was defeated; God picked me up and put me back into the fight. I feared time was running out; God gave me a new beginning. The cancer cannot win against God's love; against the team of scientists, physicians, and nurses; against the support of my family and friends. You are the guide, you are the motivator, you are the healer, you are the Great I Am. Thank you for leading me to the win. May I now be a champion for others who feel what I felt, who need to know the Power behind every victory is you Gracious God. Amen. Cards and notes filled with prayers and hopes for miraculous healing can be sent to: **Mr. Michael Cahoon, C/O: Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, 1615 Beverly Lane, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Robert (Bob) Kuhaupt** is still in the healing hands of our Great Physician. Healing God, be near Mr. Bob in his time of weakness and pain; sustain him by your grace, that Mr. Bob's strength and courage may not fail; heal him according to your will; and help him always to believe that what happens to him here is of little account if You hold him in eternal life, loving Lord and caring God. Amen. Please send your prayers of healing and support to: **Mr. Robert (Bob) and Ms. Joy Kuhaupt, Sussex Mills Apartments, W240 N6345 Maple Ave. #116, Sussex, WI 53089.**
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** has returned home and is grateful for all your prayers and cards of encouragement and support. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: **Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Tom Damp** has been comfortable and safe in his home for years. This has been possible primarily due to home healthcare services. However, with significant changes in coverage from health insurance, availability of in-home health care personnel, and other life circumstances, Mr. Tom is having to make unexpected decisions; stay in his home or transition to assisted living. He asks for your prayers and care as God reveals, God's plan for his new season. Caring Father, we thank you for the opportunity we have as a church family to pray and care for Mr. Tom Damp. We ask that you bless him with the resources to keep safe from harm. Please surround this whole process with your wisdom and mercy, Lord. We pray for Mr. Tom's health and care in this whole process. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen. Card and noted can be mailed to: **Mr. Tom Damp, 1707 Sunset Ridge Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**
- No one enters this life a follower of Christ. If we are God's children, it is because we were born spiritually sometime after we were born physically. God uses our prayers as one of the means of drawing people, including our grandchildren, to God. We lift up prayers of healing and strength for **Mr. Ben Barth**, fiancé of Ms. Heather Wolf, granddaughter of Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge. Mr. Ben has been given a new heart and new lungs but is experiencing kidney concerns. Cards of prayers for healing and restoration can be mailed to: **Mr. Ben Barth, 969 Tuscola Lane, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- We remain in prayer and support for **Mrs. Ann Cording**. Great Physician, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for God's miraculous healing today. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. We're not promised

a painless life on this earth, but You do want us to live a happy one. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Sickness and injury can't stop God-placed dreams. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: **Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**

- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: **Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: **Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to **Mr. Allan and Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.**

We continue to celebrate our 175th year of service, commitment and Methodism in West Bend, Wisconsin.

“Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Anticipating Our Future”

Let us pray: We thank our Lord for our family and friends.
Help us remember all human love is a beam of Christ's light.

Take from our hearts all selfishness, all jealousies and possessiveness.
May we seek at all times to give and not get.
Keep us ever open to Thy love in Christ Jesus,
that our love may communicate and reflect Thine own,
and our relationships become a gateway to Thee.

Oh God, who strengthens us so that we may strengthen others...
Kindle in our hearts a flame of love for You and humanity.
Help us so to live that our lives may witness to Thy power.
Help us by deeds of love and mercy to show forth Thy praise.
Help us also, as we have opportunity to reveal to others what You have done for us,
that they may share our experiences and open their hearts to Thy Grace.

Oh God, who called us to fight the good fight of faith...
Help us to stand against all that would attack us from within and without and having done all to stand.
Help us all take our place in the fight against evil in the world, trusting in the Holy Spirit -
That Your rule of love will be established in all relationships.

Oh God, help us in this world of change and chance - to reflect on Your unchanging love.
By the memory of all Thy mercies and by the recollection of all that has the power to cheer and comfort our hearts,
Kindle within our minds the lamp of undying gratitude.
Make us conscious - when life is crowded by fear of doubt -
of those experiences that give us strength and hope and renew our confidence in You.

Adapted from: <https://www.morningsideunitedchurch.org/prayer-for-the-congregation>.

May I love as Christ loved so that in myself, I become nothing, in order that Christ may be seen in me, and I can show forth His love in my life, to Your praise and glory.

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin