

OCTOBER 2026

The Union Press

"To know Him and make Him known"

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

DRAWING NEAR THROUGH PRAYER

There is a famous photograph of Caroline Kennedy and her brother John Jr. playing in the Oval Office while their father works at his desk. Of all the senators, dignitaries, and advisors who passed through Washington, very few had round-the-clock access to the President. His children did. They didn't need an appointment, and they didn't need to impress anyone.

That picture captures one of the great privileges of the Christian life. Through Jesus Christ, we have access to our Heavenly Father at any hour of any day, and he will never turn us away.

A Gift, Not a Ladder

When I came to know the Lord shortly after high school, the question on my heart was simple: I believe in Jesus. Now what? I believed he is God's Son, that he died for my sins, that he rose again, and that he alone can save me. But what does it look like to grow?

God has answered that question by giving his people ordinary gifts: his Word, prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are not rungs on a stairway to heaven by which we earn salvation. They are means of grace, gifts through which the Holy Spirit nourishes our faith and forms Christ in us. In this article, we turn to prayer, which we might simply define as coming before God through Christ, offering him our desires according to his will, confessing our sins, and thanking him for his mercies.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pastor's Letter 1-3
Upcoming Events 4
Calendar 5
Just So You Know .. 6
Prayer Journal Page. 7
Family Fun Night 8

REMINDER:

**Deadline for Newsletter
Articles Is Oct. 25th.**

Preparing to Pray

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus assumes that his people will give, pray, and fast. His concern is how and why we do it. He names two ways not to pray.

The hypocrites loved to pray on street corners so they might be seen and praised. The pagans "heap up empty phrases," treating prayer like an incantation, as if enough words or just the right words could make God listen. Jesus is not against public prayer or long prayers; he prayed both. The question is what we think makes prayer effective. Prayer is not a performance for other people, and it is not a magic formula. Its blessing is being seen and heard by our Father in heaven.

Our struggles today may look different. Maybe we feel self-conscious: Am I doing this right? Maybe our prayers have fallen into a rut, or we wonder why we need to pray if God already knows everything. Jesus meets us with two simple instructions.

First, "When you pray." Jesus assumes that his people pray. That doesn't mean we always pray well. Our prayers can be distracted, inconsistent, and painfully dry. But the Spirit of adoption lives within us, and the Christian heart keeps crying, "Abba! Father!"

(Continued on Page 2)

Second, "go into your room and shut the door." For many of us, the challenge is finding the time at all. Jesus, whom crowds followed everywhere, still made it his practice to rise early and be alone with his Father. In a dry season during seminary, when work, school, and a young family had squeezed out my prayer life, I gave up the radio and my Greek flash cards on the drive to school and used that time to pray. It made a tremendous difference in my heart.

But some of you are already carrying so much that one more discipline, even a good one, feels like the last straw. Remember that prayer is a means of grace. It is not an "I have to" but an "I get to." By God's grace, I get to rest in the finished work of Christ, unload my burdens, and be in his presence. Sometimes "shutting the door" simply means turning off the radio on a ten-minute drive, sitting quietly on the porch at the end of a long day, or not reaching for the phone first thing in the morning.

Prayer is not an employee reporting to the boss, a defendant appearing before a judge, or a customer submitting a request. It is a child coming to a Father who loves them.

How We Pray

Most of us know the Lord's Prayer by heart. It opens with an address to our Father, followed by six petitions: three about God ("Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will") and three about us (our bread, our forgiveness, our deliverance). All six are God-centered, aimed at his glory as well as our good.

Jesus isn't just helping us organize our requests. He is retraining our desires. As God's Word teaches us what God loves, prayer teaches our hearts to love the same things. Each petition is a small school of formation.

"Hallowed be Thy name." We ask that God be honored in everything by which he makes himself known. Praying this loosens our grip on "What will people think of me?" and replaces it with "Will God be honored?"

"Thy kingdom come." We long for Christ's saving reign to advance as the gospel spreads until he returns. Our reputation, comfort, plans, families, and even our churches can become little kingdoms we are desperate to protect. This petition trains us to long for his.

"Thy will be done." We ask God to teach us his commands and give us grace to obey, and to make us willing to trust his providence when his purposes are hard to understand. Jesus prayed this himself in Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours, be done." He brought his own desire honestly to his Father and entrusted it to him. In this petition, we learn to surrender our plans to God's wisdom.

"Give us this day our daily bread." This petition teaches dependence. God ordinarily provides through our labor, yet even our ability to work and enjoy its fruit is his gift. Prayer moves us from self-sufficiency to daily reliance.

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." We are sinners in daily need of mercy, and those who have received mercy are called to extend it. Our forgiving others does not earn God's forgiveness; we are forgiven by grace alone. But it is hard to pray, "Forgive me the debt I could never repay," while telling a neighbor, "I will never release you from what you owe me." Here God makes us humble people who live by grace and give it away.

"Lead us not into temptation." Our boys sometimes fall out of bed because they sleep too close to the edge. We are often like that with sin, asking God to keep us from temptation while lingering as near to it as possible. Notice what Jesus teaches us to do: pray. We don't merely say, "I'll be stronger next time." We say, "Father, lead me. Protect me. Deliver me." Here God teaches us to hate sin, recognize our weakness, and seek his protection from the evil one.

Many of us close with the doxology, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." It isn't in the earliest manuscripts of Matthew, but it is a thoroughly biblical and fitting ending. After bringing our needs to God, we end where we began, with God himself. The kingdom, the power, and the glory are his. And "Amen" simply means, "Let it be so."

(Pastor's Letter Continued From Page 2)

Do you see what Jesus is doing? He isn't only teaching us what to ask for. He is teaching us what to love. As we pray according to God's will, he teaches our hearts to want what he wants.

Who Prays for Us?

If we're honest, none of us prays as we should. Our prayers are distracted and our desires disordered. We care more about our own name than God's, we build our own kingdoms, we resist his will, we worry about our bread, we struggle to forgive, and sometimes we walk straight toward the temptations we ask him to keep us from. What hope is there for weak people who don't even pray as they should?

The hope is that we are not the only ones praying. Hebrews 7:25 says of Jesus, "He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Every week in the Apostles' Creed we confess that Christ ascended and is seated at the Father's right hand. One thing he is doing there right now is interceding for his people. When you pray, you are not trying to make your own way into God's presence. Jesus has already opened the way, and as our Great High Priest he continually represents us before the Father.

That should change how we come. Maybe you haven't prayed much this week. Maybe you lost your temper, or gave in to the same temptation again, or you're ashamed to still be struggling with something you thought you'd have overcome years ago. You begin to picture your Father with his arms crossed, disappointed that you're back again.

That is not the picture Scripture gives us. Jesus is not pleading with an unwilling Father to love you. The Father sent the Son because he already loved you. Hebrews invites us to "draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." It is not a throne of reluctance or disappointment, but a throne of grace. And the One who brings you there sympathizes with your weakness, for he has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. He knows tiredness, sorrow, rejection, and suffering.

So when your prayer life feels weak, remember that your salvation does not depend on the strength of your prayers but on the strength of the One who prays for you. When your prayers are distracted, his intercession is not. When you can't find words, he never lacks them. When you forget to pray, he has not forgotten you.

Draw Near

Remember those children in the Oval Office. They had access not because they were senators or dignitaries, but because the President was their father. Something infinitely greater is true of everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ: his Father is our Father.

Prayer is not ultimately our attempt to reach up to God. It is possible because, in Jesus Christ, God has come down and drawn near to us. So pray according to the pattern Jesus gave us, pray with confidence, and draw near to your Father through Christ.



JOIN US...October 18th
10:00 am Worship Service
The church will be providing lunch
following the service.

On Sunday, November 1, we will honor those who have passed away in the last year. If you would like a loved one to be honored on Memorial Sunday, please contact the church office by October 25th so Julie can include them in the Memorial Booklet and slideshow.



The Trustees worked hard at cleaning up the sign and painting the window frames.

COME ONE COME ALL TO THE UNION GROWTH GROUP

Beginning October 7th 6:30-8:00pm at the church.
We will meet October 7, 14, 21, 28; November 4, 11, 18;
and December 2, 9, 16.

This season will begin with a study of the book of Jonah.

Oct 7th – Jonah 1:1-6

Oct 14th – Jonah 1:7-17

Oct 21st – Jonah 1:17-2:10

Oct 28th – Jonah 2:10-3:5

Nov 4th – Jonah 3:6-10

Nov 11th – Jonah 4

Nov 18th – Begins a four-week study of the Birth of Christ according to the Gospels. Question for the first week: “Where do you find the birth narrative in each Gospel?”

Hope to see you this coming Wednesday, October 7th at 6:30 pm. Bring a friend!

JOIN UNION AT ONE OF THESE EVENTS



REDNER'S RECEIPTS

Union can receive 1% of the total amount of the tapes submitted. If you want to participate you must stop at the store office or Customer Service area to get a Save-A-Tape card. There is a box near the elevator at Union for you to put your receipts in. **You must remember to use your card so that the Save-A-Tape total is on the receipt.**



Union has limited seats reserved at both the Solid Rock Banquet on October 22nd at 5:00 pm and the Solanco Neighborhood Ministries Empty Bowl Fundraiser on November 7th at 4:30 pm. Come find out more about each of these great local ministries! Seats are first come first serve. Please contact Jeremy if you are interested in attending.

OCTOBER

2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 1:00 Deacon Meeting 1:00 Bible Adventure 3:45 Solid Rock @Bart	2	3
4 8:30 Prayer Meeting (Library) 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship World Communion Sunday	5 10:00 Spin Class Octorara Pines Growth Group	6 7:00 Trustee Mtg	7 10:00 Prayer Meeting (Library) 6:30 Union Growth Group	8 1:00 Bible Adventure 3:45 Solid Rock @Bart 5:30 Quarryville Growth Group	9	10
11 8:30 Prayer Meeting (Library) 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Pastor/Clergy Appreciation Sunday	12 1:00 Bible Study Octorara Pines Growth Group	13	14 10:00 Prayer Meeting (Library) 10:00 Spin Class 6:30 Union Growth Group	15 1:00 Bible Adventure 3:45 Solid Rock @Bart	16 6:00-8:00 pm Family Night	17
18 HOMECOMING 8:30 Prayer Meeting (Library) 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship LUNCHEON	19 10:00 Spin Class Octorara Pines Growth Group	20	21 10:00 Prayer Meeting (Library) 6:30 Union Growth Group 7:00 Session Mtg	22 1:00 Bible Adventure 3:45 Solid Rock @Bart	23	24
25 8:30 Prayer Meeting (Library) 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Reformation Sunday	26 Octorara Pines Growth Group	27	28 10:00 Prayer Meeting (Library) 10:00 Spin Class 6:30 Union Growth Group	29 1:00 Bible Adventure 3:45 Solid Rock @Bart 5:30 Quarryville Growth Group	30	31 Reformation Day

Prayer Journal

TODAY'S DATE: _____

BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

PRAYER FOR MYSELF

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

WHAT I AM THANKFUL FOR

WHAT I AM HOPEFUL FOR

LECTIONARY PASSAGES

October 4th – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19:1-14;
Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

October 11th – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23;
Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

October 18th – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99:1-9;
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

October 25th – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17;
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

FOOD BANK

Tuna (can), Soups (cans), Seafood soup/chowder (can),
SPAM, Refried beans (can), Cheerios (yellow box),
Triscuits/ Wheat Thins crackers, mustard, fruit cups,
granola bars, toothpaste, diapers (size 5, 6, and 3T, 4T, 5T)

~ Thanksgiving Meals ~

(No perishable donations can be put in the Union cart by
Sunday, November 8th.)

Turkey or gift card to Giant, Stuffing Mix, Gravy packets
or a jar of Turkey Gravy, Green beans (can), Cream of
mushroom soup, Cranberry Sauce (can), Yellow Cake Mix
(box), pumpkin puree (30 oz. can), evaporated milk (12 oz
can), butter (1 lb box), brown sugar, Canned Yams

GREETERS

- 4 Kevin & Carol Oswald
- 11 (OPEN)
- 18 (OPEN)
- 25 (OPEN)

Happy Birthday!



- 2 Samuel Stoner
- 5 Thomas Nixon
Wendi Greenleaf
- 6 Corrie Chase
- 8 Mary Shoemaker
- 9 Zoe Sweitzer
- 10 Judy Greenleaf
Keith Oswald
- 14 Amber Greenleaf Hudler
- 16 Julia Shoemaker
- 17 James Thompson
Christopher Scotten
- 20 Miranda Miller
Betty Joan Vasco
Kevin Oswald
- 21 Maryellen Graver
- 25 Aiden Hastings
- 27 Joseph Shaffer
- 31 Matthew Wade
Karen Roselle



Union will again be
collecting donations on
Sunday, October 18th to end
hunger through the Solanco
Crop Walk. Please make
checks payable to Union and
mark that it's for the "Crop
Walk"

Union Presbyterian Church
5637 Street Road
Kirkwood, PA 17536



We are collecting new and used, clean coats, hats, gloves, scarves, snowsuits, and new socks. Please hang coats in the entryway by November 8, and they will be delivered to one of the collection sites.



facebook.com/unionpckirkwood

[@unionpresbyterianchurch1502](https://twitter.com/unionpresbyterianchurch1502)



www.unionpres.com