



40 DAY PRAYER GUIDE Denominational Affiliation Discernment Period

This 40-day prayer guide has been written for the purpose of communally discerning how the Lord might be leading Leesville Methodist Church in our next chapter of ministry together. The guide is intended to be used as part of your individual and/or family devotions beginning October 25, 2024 for a period of 40 days. It is our prayer that as we use this guide God will join our individual and family prayers together to prepare our hearts in this season of discernment.

As we read through Scripture we find that “forty” is often connected to a period of new development in the history of God’s plan of salvation for His people. It’s a time of preparation, consecration, sometimes a season of judgment; a time of dedication that God uses to further the work with and for God’s people. On each occasion, a person, a family, or a community experiences a season through which a new development in God’s purpose for them is ushered in. With hope, we anticipate this 40-day season being used by God to consecrate our hearts and prepare our congregation for our next season of ministry together. We give thanks for God’s faithfulness and all God has done through LMC and now, we look forward to how God will lead us in the future.

What plans does God have for us as we seek to faithfully live out the Gospel in our community? How is the Spirit equipping us and preparing us to participate with what God is already doing in our congregation and in our community? We give all thanks to God, for the grace He has poured into our hearts through Christ, and we are encouraged by the ongoing work of God’s Spirit in our midst. Our called church conference is set for Sunday, December 15, 2024 at 2pm.

Join in this process by opening your Bible to the scripture each day to read the Word of God. Pray the prayers provided in addition to your own prayers. Each week has a theme and each Saturday identifies a particular group to include in your prayers. May we all listen for the many ways the Lord will reveal His will for us.

Blessings!

They Way Forward Committee

Day 1

Psalm 105:4 Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Lord, we thank you for your presence in our lives. So often we seek out answers in the world and turn to you as a last resort. Help us have the humility and wisdom to turn to you first, to be open to your prompting, and to seek your will for all our decisions. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 2

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

God, we ask that you would renew our minds with your wisdom. We pray that all would seek your kingdom in this time of discernment. Father, teach us and correct us, encourage us and build us up. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 3

John 5:30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

God, give us the mind of Christ, that in all things we would seek not our will, but Yours. Equip us with your Holy Spirit that we may have wisdom and strength as we minister to our community. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 4

Psalm 40:16 But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the Lord!"

Lord, we thank you for your comfort during this difficult time of discernment. We pray that all would be reminded of your faithfulness. Though we may be uncertain of our future affiliation, we can always be certain of our salvation, assured by our reconciliation to you through Christ Jesus. For this, we can always rejoice. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 5

Luke 11:9-10 'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Lord, we pray that each of us would ask you this question, "Jesus, what do you want for this congregation?" We desire your answer, your will, and we desire you. Increase our patience as we ask this, and many other questions we have on our hearts and minds. Help us receive your answer through your written Word, in

prayer, and in fellowship. In the name of Jesus, Amen. On this day, include the lay leadership of LMC in your prayers. This includes the Church Council chair and members, Trustees chair and members, Finance chair and members, Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair and Members, our lay leader, and our lay speakers.

Lord, thank you for these willing servants. They have given so much of themselves in service to you and your Church. Sustain them for this season of ministry. Guard their hearts from harm and bless them in their work.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 6

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority.'

God, we ask that you show us the path on this unfamiliar journey. Guide our steps and remove the distractions that keep us from hearing and obeying your words. Your ways are righteous and true. Strengthen us to choose your instruction over our own understanding. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 7

Joshua 1:7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go.

Lord, it is hard to be a disciple. So often we are tempted to follow the ways of the world or our own selfish desire than to follow your commands. Teach us to be the people you created us to be and grant us resolve to live out our purpose according to your will. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 8

Romans 2:13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

Lord, so often we are like clashing cymbals, proclaiming your words but failing to love one another. Help us to not only read and hear your teachings, but to act in accordance with them so that we may be a living witness of the Gospel. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 9

Matthew 9:9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

Jesus, as you called Matthew to repent of his sin and follow you, you call us to do the same. We confess our sins before you. We have failed to be an obedient church and we have not lived out your command to love you with all our hearts, minds, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors. We return to you, Lord. We ask for your mercy and we receive your grace. Give us opportunities to give and receive love so that we are restored for joyful obedience. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 10

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

God, we are grateful for your gift of salvation. May the fruit of our justification be a pure heart, created and renewed by you and our relationship with Jesus. Make us mindful of the joy that comes from knowing we have received your grace. We pray that joy would sustain our soul during times of distress. Restore our souls to you, O God, that we may always be mindful of your presence. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 11

Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Almighty God, may the words of this song be with us each day as we strive to live our lives in accordance with your will: Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, Pure and holy, Tried and true. With thanksgiving I'll be a living Sanctuary for You. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 12

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

God, you have created us to be in community with one another. Help us to lift up one another, reconcile with one another, and grow together in spiritual maturity. Grant us the strength to center our relationships around you. In the name of Jesus, Amen. On this day, include your lay speakers and the staff of LMC in your prayers. Lord, we commend to you our lay speakers and church leaders. There will be many important decisions that must be made, many words that must be chosen carefully, and many needs that must be answered. Grant these servants your wisdom and your guidance. We pray for the health, protection, and well-being of our leaders their families, and we pray for them to find rest and comfort. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 13

Psalm 92:1 *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High*

Lord, teach us to offer you a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all our daily experiences of life. Teach us to be joyful always, to pray continually, and to give thanks in all our circumstances. Change our outlook and attitude into one of joyful contentment with our present circumstances. Thank you, God, for the gifts you have given and help us to put those gifts to use for your glory. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 14

Psalm 106:1 *Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.*

Almighty God, all glory belongs to you. We come to you in prayer to glorify your name—not because of what you do, but because of who you are. Your unconditional love is so great it is beyond our understanding. You deserve all the glory, honor, and praise we can offer. In the midst of this struggle, we choose to praise you and acknowledge that you have everything working for good. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 15

Colossians 1:11-12 *May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

Lord, we know that when we are weak, you are strong. Help us remember to be grateful for your continual presence which strengthens us for each new day. Thank you for this congregation of believers and all the ways we have been able to share the grace and peace of Christ with this community. It is our joy to serve and we pray you would show us the path for continuing our work in the future. We pray that everything is done in a manner that brings you praise and honor. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 16

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

Lord, we praise you for your faithfulness in times of joy and times of difficulty. Give us grace and endurance to bring all things to you in prayer so that we will rejoice in all circumstances with grateful hearts. Thank you for your gentle and careful watch over us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 17

Psalms 118:24 *This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

God, with the dawning of each day, we find new ways to be grateful to you. Your creation reminds us of the beauty that exists in the world. Help us to keep our eyes focused on you and the goodness you bring. Present us with opportunities today to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 18

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Loving God, we thank you and praise you for sending your Son Jesus to pay the ultimate price for our sins. Help us to remember all you do for us in our daily lives. As you guide us in the decision we are making, give us the strength to trust and obey you always. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 19

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Lord, as we walk through this season we sometimes find ourselves angry, hurt, or disappointed with our fellow Christians. We pray that your peace would rule in our hearts and that through your power we can offer grace to one another. We remain thankful for this body of believers and all the work that has been done here in your name. In the name of Jesus, Amen. On this day, include in your prayers all people served by the local ministries of our church. God, we are so thankful for the opportunity to serve the people of this community. We pray that all those who are touched by our ministries receive these blessings and also know the love and grace of Jesus. Equip us to meet their needs and empower us to share our witness of God's goodness. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 20

Psalms 28:7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

God, sometimes we don't know the words to pray, but we want to pray for your will to be done. Teach us to put our trust in you. Teach us to hear your gentle whisper guiding, assuring, and correcting us. Make us more aware of time and space for us to spend with you and give us the words to pray. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 21

Psalms 119: 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

God, help us to spend time each day studying your word. Show us the way in the darkness, illuminating the path forward for our congregation. When we are uncertain and afraid, fill us with your strength, reminding us you are continually by our side. Help us to trust in you, Lord, knowing you will lead us through the darkness and into your light. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 22

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Lord, grant us clear guidance for our church. As we submit to you, help us that you will direct our path and grant us confidence that your direction is always the best way to go. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 23

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Lord, how amazing it is that you care so greatly for each of us. Help us to trust in your provision for our lives. We surrender this time of discernment to you and give over any worry, anxiety, or distraction that may keep us from receiving your guidance. Help us to keep our eyes upon you. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 24

Hebrews 13:6 So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'

God, we thank you for your constant presence in our lives. Open our eyes and ears that we may become more aware of your help that sustains us in uncertain times. Grant us confidence that may overcome our doubts and fears, while also keeping us humbly seeking your direction for our future. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 25

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a stronghold on a day of trouble; he protects those who take refuge in him.

God, you are our refuge in times of unrest. In your strength and love, we walk forward in confidence, trusting in the Holy Spirit to lead our path forward. Give us the courage to speak boldly, and with clarity and peace, about the hope that is within us. Fill us with the faith in knowing you walk this journey beside us, before us and behind us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 26

Matthew 17:20 He said to them, 'Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'

God of hope, thank you for your word. We listen with great expectation for your wisdom and guidance. Grant us endurance to bring all things to you with faith. Help us to believe in you and trust in you fully, knowing that in you all things are possible. Lord, strengthen our faith! On this day, include the youth and children of our church in your prayers. Lord, we lift up the youth and children of our church to you today. Reveal yourself to them in a new way and remind them of your

presence in their life. Help them to rely on your Holy Spirit for guidance and direction as they face the challenges of this season. Develop in them an identity founded in Christ so that they would become grounded in who you say they are. Confirm in their heart that they are beloved, and lavish your unending love on them today. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 27

Jeremiah 29:11 For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Gracious God, we get scared and nervous about the future. But your word assures us that the future is in Your hands. Be with us as we go through this season. Help us to make good decisions, and be with us each step of the way. We know that your plans are for good. Thank you for giving us hope toward the future. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 28

Isaiah 40:31 But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Eternal God, loving and generous, thank you for giving us strength in our weariness, guidance in our confusion, and hope in our despair. Please bless us with courage to follow your will and trust in your presence through the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 29

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mighty God, bless us with greater trust that you are nearby and long to help. Empower us to be the people you desire us to be. Open our hearts, teach us to trust, and guide us in your truth. Thank you for your Spirit which fill us with joy, peace, and hope. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 30

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

Lord, we pray to ask for your hand upon our beloved church. We need your healing touch and we ask for your blessing. It's been a difficult season and we pray that each member would feel your Spirit present and experience peace that passes our understanding. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 31

Psalm 130:5-6 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

Lord, you are our hope. Your word tells us to hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering because we know you are faithful. Take this beautiful promise that you have given us and write it on our minds and in our hearts. Fill us with your hope and help us not to waver in the face of uncertainty. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 32

Psalm 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that our hope is not in our circumstances. Our hope is not even in the hoped-for answers to our prayers. But our hope is in you and your word, that it will sustain us, guide us, and give us wisdom in the midst of all that is happening around us. May our prayer echo that of the Psalmist's: "for I shall again praise him, my help and my God." In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 33

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord of all, we pray that our church members would have genuine love for the Lord, for each other, and for the world. Grant us your grace to hold fast to what is good, and enliven our hearts to serve the Lord with enthusiasm. Help us each to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and constant in prayer. In the name of Jesus, Amen. On this day, include in your prayers all the small groups of LMC. Gracious God, we pray for the people connected to you and one another in our small groups. Allow their relationships to be sustained even amidst disagreement. We pray that their love for one another would consume their hearts and their meetings would be filled with the peace that comes from your presence. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 34

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble.

Father, we thank you for the wonderful example of true humility that is seen in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, despite being God incarnate, lived His life in humble submission to you. Help us to develop the spiritual fruit of humility that is so important in the lives of all your children, if we are to grow in grace and to mature into a deeper knowledge of you. Help us not to act out of selfish ambition or foolish vanity, but rather develop the grace to regard the needs and desires of others as being more important than our own. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 35

Mark 9:35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.'

Lord, help each of us serve with grace and kindness. Give us eyes to see people as you do; not judging by mere appearances, but valuing and treating people as Jesus does. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, the One who washed His disciples' feet, set on us a path of servanthood and grant us a willing spirit. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 36

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Mighty God, we come humbly before you asking you to teach us how to submit to your will and your way. Your word says that when we humble ourselves before you, that you will make us both wise and honored. Grant us that wisdom as we seek your will for our future. Help us to demonstrate a spirit of humility as we interact with others. Everything that we are and that we know is because of you Lord. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 37

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Lord, today we choose to walk humbly with you. We choose to live by your Holy Spirit and to follow your lead. As we discern the direction of our church, help us to hear you clearly, for we do not want to walk by pride or self-sufficiency, we want to walk with you. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 38

Colossians 3:12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Holy God, thank you for loving us. Clothe each of us with compassion toward others. Make it radiate from our actions and deeds. You are the example for love. As we move forward, help us to be a similar example for other people. Give us a selfless spirit that seeks to serve others. Amen.

Day 39

Romans 5:8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Gracious Lord, you demonstrated your love for us in so many ways. Even though our nature is sinful, you sent your son to die for us. Be with us as we determine our path for sharing that truth with others, so they can know your saving grace. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 40

Psalms 115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

God, give us a single-minded desire, a single-minded ambition for your glory alone, to glorify you alone. May you become greater; may we become less. God, may you remove all pride from us. May you help us to see everything as we make this decision for our congregation and community. Lord, help us to desire your glory in everything, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness. On this day, pray for our called church conference that will take place on December 15th. Heavenly Father, send your Spirit of peace to be upon our gathering. Where there is rude and disrespectful behavior, there is discord. We pray against any angry or anxious hearts. We declare peace within our meeting in Jesus Name. Lord, incline our hearts and ears to you because when we receive your divine counsel, we also receive your wisdom. We thank you for your guidance; let it direct our steps. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

-ATASCOCITA UMC Humble, Texas