

# STUDY, PRAYER AND FASTING IN PREPARATION FOR GC 2020



*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?*

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

— Isaiah 58:6-7

## STUDY: WHO ARE WE? A JOURNEY FROM HEAD TO HEART, PARTS 2 AND 3

The season ahead promises change and challenge as we approach General Conference 2020. Bishop Easterling is calling us into a time of introspective study so that we reclaim our identity as a people of God, shaped in the Wesleyan spirit, within the rich heritage of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

- Part 2 is suggested to begin the week of January 8.
- Part 3 is scheduled to be a Lenten study and virtual pilgrimage that begins the week of February 26.
- For those who haven't yet started the study, an intensive retreat will be offered soon.

## ISAIAH 58 SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

**Purpose:** To prepare our hearts and minds for General Conference, that it will be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to prepare ourselves as vessels for God's Holy will.

### Pray Each Day:

#### Opening:

O God our deliverer: You led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen. (*United Methodist Hymnal* #268)

#### Reflecting, Petitioning and Listening:

This is a time for you to personally add questions and petitions, and to leave space for the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

#### Closing:

God of Transformation,  
We are not accountable for the environments  
into which we were born,  
but we are accountable for the environments  
we create.

We are not accountable for the bigotry  
into which we were born,  
but we are accountable for the bigotry  
that we birth.

We are not accountable for the lack  
of love that existed in the homes  
into which we were born,  
but we are accountable for the love that  
resides in the homes we create.  
May the lessons of our pasts inform  
our present, and transform our future.  
May we use the power of your Holy Spirit to  
create environments of holiness and healing.  
Amen.

(A Prayer for October 17, 2014 by LaTrelle Miller Easterling)

#### Fast on Wednesdays and Fridays from Sunrise to Sunset:

Fasting has been a part of Methodism from its early beginnings. John Wesley considered fasting an important part of a Christian's life and he fasted weekly, or twice weekly if he was undergoing a spiritual struggle. To Wesley, fasting was an important way to express sorrow for sin and penitence for overindulgence. He believed it allowed more time for prayer and was more meaningful if combined with giving to the poor.

Between sunrise and sunset, abstain from all solid food and consume clear liquids only.  
*If you have any health concerns, please consult a physician before beginning your fast.*

## REGIONAL MONTHS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Join your siblings in a time of intentional prayer and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays from sunrise to sunset.

Western Region: January 15-February 14, 2020

Baltimore Region: February 15-March 14, 2020

Washington Region: March 15-April 14, 2020

Southern Region: April 15-May 15, 2020