

How to Use this Prayer Guide (Vol. 5)

This month we are focusing on praying for three different areas within our church:

- Our Pastor Search Team
- Our Church Family
- Our Future Lead Pastor

In this transition time, it is vital that we seek the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership. As we pray for these various areas in our church we trust in Lord's plan for the desired man to lead the flock at Richland Creek Community Church.

Our previous prayer guides were designed to build on one another, to prepare our hearts and minds to deliberately and continuously seek the will of God for our church.

Below is a list of our previous prayer guides:

- Vol. 1 - Our relationship with God and others and understanding God's will for our church.
- Vol. 2 - The character of God and putting our faith in His promises which results in our obedience to His Word.
- Vol. 3 - Learning how to pray to God and praying through His Word which gives us a right understanding of how to pray for our church.
- Vol. 4 - Understanding how to Love God and Love Others while gaining an understanding of what love is and how true unity looks in our church family.

All previous prayer guides are located on our website:

richlandcreek.com/prayerguides

Defined by the **Word**, **Devoted** to **Prayer**
and **Dependent** on the **Holy Spirit**.

DAY 1 – Connected to Christ

I am the vine: you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:5

As we think of our Pastor Search Team, the Elders are looking for spiritually mature individuals who can represent the Creek well in the selection of a new pastor. Obedience to Christ will be key. As true disciples of Christ they must bear much fruit for God's Kingdom. They are dependent on and know, without a shadow of a doubt, they cannot separate themselves from God.

A key word that stands out in this verse is abide. In John 15:1-17, abide is used over 10 times. When Jesus states that we are to abide in Him, He means to remain or stay focused on Him and all that He has taught us about being his disciples. John also writes that God will cut away that which does not bear good fruit and will prune that which produces good fruit, so more good fruit will be produced.

As our Pastor Search Team is being selected and go out in search of a new pastor for Richland Creek, may they allow God to cut away what is harmful, but also prune them to grow daily in their walk with Christ. God did not say there are some things you can do apart from Him; He said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." Nothing means nothing. Though we are focusing on the Pastor Search Team, we all should reflect on our personal walk and how we can abide in Jesus.

Questions to consider:

What struggles do I have when it comes to leaning on Jesus? When I need assistance with something, do I ask Jesus to help me, or does pride get in the way of His blessings?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that our Pastor Search Team will abide in Christ.
- Pray that our Pastor Search Team will be filled with the Spirit.
- Pray that the Pastor Search Team will cleanse their hearts of any struggles and focus on Christ.

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. Psalm 66:18

DAY 2 – Spiritual Wisdom

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Colossians 1:9

Paul is with some fellow brothers in Christ, and we learn their names in chapter 4. They are overflowing with joy and prayer about the good news they have heard regarding the faithfulness, growth, and fruit that is transpiring in Colossae. Paul and his companions are in constant prayer for their new brothers and sisters in Christ, not only for their new and growing faith in Christ, but also for their continued growth in the knowledge of His will.

This knowledge is not just a knowledge one gains by reading a book or through wisdom of time. This knowledge, as one commentator wrote, is super knowledge. A knowledge that can only be given by the Lord. A knowledge that is precise and correct.

Oh that our Pastor Search Team will be filled with the knowledge of God's will and not their own will or understanding. As we pray for this knowledge, we are also praying that we and others will have submission to our Lord. Through submission and abiding in Christ (like we prayed yesterday), we and this team will be filled with spiritual wisdom and spiritual understanding of what our King will have us do.

Questions to consider:

Have you prayed for the knowledge of God's will for your life, or are you running after your own will? Are there times in your life when you know that the knowledge you have is from God and not something you have gained on your own?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Pastor Search Team will be filled with the knowledge of God's will for Richland Creek Community Church.
- Pray that the team will be filled with wisdom and understanding that only God can provide.
- Pray that the spiritual maturity and wisdom the Pastor Search Team portrays, is that which can only be given by the Lord, through the prayer of His church.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. Colossians 1:3

DAY 3 – Unified in the Spirit

Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Unity of the Spirit is something, as believers, we should have when it comes to working and being eager to accomplish tasks for the Kingdom. Notice we are called to “maintain” the unity of the Spirit and not to “create” a unity of the Spirit. Tony Merida, in the commentary “Christ-Centered Exposition, Exalting Jesus in Ephesians,” states that God unites us, and we are to seek to maintain unity by the help of the Holy Spirit. This eagerness is given by the Spirit for us to dive into and to maintain what has already been given by God. All of this is held in the bond of peace. The term “bond” is that which binds us together. It is the ligaments by which the members of the human body are united together. To put it into perspective, it’s that close (inner) identity that produces harmony between members joined together. It’s the Body of Christ. This spirit of peace has wholeness to it—a sense of harmony when all essential parts are joined together.

As God puts the Pastor Search Team together, maintaining unity through the Spirit is key. It is necessary for a smooth and busy time of reviewing resumes, choosing individuals to interview, interviewing those individuals, presenting individuals to the Elder Body and finally the presenting of them to the church. This team will be a part of a lengthy process that requires a unity that can only be of God. Remember, this is not by chance (Amos 3:3), but rather a divine matter that is led by the Spirit.

Questions to consider:

Do you see yourself unified with the church body? How can your unity with the church body bring a bond of peace?

What does a bond of peace look like within the community of believers?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for a powerful unity within the Pastor Search Team.
- Pray that the oneness in Spirit will be shining bright through the process.

Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19

DAY 4 – Kingdom Focused

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

In the verses leading up to Isaiah 55:8-9, the writer is asking us to seek the Lord while He can be found and to forsake our wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts. God is saying we are wicked and unrighteous. Our ways and thoughts are evil; God's ways and thoughts are holy and exalted. His are above anything we can imagine, yet they are plainly written in His Word. It is not out of pride that God is speaking this way, for that would be evil. He is speaking this way for us to focus on the things that are above, and not the circumstances that take our focus off of Him.

Our Pastor Search Team could face hard times when it comes to the direction, or the path they are following when looking for a lead pastor. They could face challenges when choosing between different people who are qualified for the position. This is a team that has been specifically chosen by the elder body. Together, they will keep focused on the things that are above and not on their personal desire. As an individual, it is easy to walk down the wrong path, but as a team, may they walk strong in the strength of the Lord.

Questions to consider:

Is the path you are walking the path of the Lord's will or your own? How can we keep ourselves on the right path and maintain heavenly thoughts? Are there evil thoughts or ways that you need to repent of and turn over to God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for God's clear direction on how resumes are examined.
- Pray for a clear path on how to conduct the interviews of potential pastors.
- Ask that God will bring the right person to the attention of the team and that person is right now being prepared to come to Richland Creek.

For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12

DAY 5 – Spirit Filled Conversations

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16

We see the Spirit mentioned in this passage over six times. Only a few times is it referenced to the spirit of this world. The Spirit of God is that which guides us and convicts us. We read that we receive from the Spirit of God the ability to understand things given by God. This understanding is wisdom. In verse 13 we see this contrast between worldly wisdom and Godly wisdom. We can compare this to yesterday's understanding of God's ways and our ways. One way is holy; the other is evil. God, in all He does, is holy and exalted.

As our Pastor Search Team sits down with prospective pastors, there are truthful conversations that are going to happen. These conversations are going to be carried on by the Spirit of God to bring clarity, truth, and understanding to our team and to the prospective pastors also. We want conversations to be glorifying to God. Not only so the team knows that the person sitting before them is our next lead pastor, but that the prospective pastor knows this as well. We need to be honest and up front with the prospective pastor. He must be up front and honest as well. This can only happen when our people are leaning completely on the Spirit, relying on His guidance. His truth will show through.

Questions to consider:

Are the conversations we have with people related to God's Word and truth? Does the Spirit lead them? What actions can we take to make sure our conversations are reliant on the Holy Spirit and His leading?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the search team will have God's wisdom in all the information they share.
- Pray that the prospective lead pastor's questions are answered with Godly wisdom.
- Pray that nothing but truth is exchanged between the prospective pastor and the Pastor Search Team.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13

DAY 6 – Seeking Discernment

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by wind. James 1:5-6

James provides these words as part of his Spirit-inspired instructions on how to face trials. As Richland Creek navigates trying times in its search for a new lead pastor, we should not lean, nor do we have to lean, on our own ability to face such a trial. A Pastor Search Team is put together to biblically determine who God has called to be the next lead pastor of Richland Creek. By God's grace and through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus, the search team, and all of us as the body of Christ, have access to God to obtain wisdom. When we ask faithfully, God loves us enough to give us the wisdom we need "without reproach," meaning we can never ask too often and He will never hold such a request against us.

The search team will need this wisdom to glorify God in their search and choosing of the next lead pastor. They will need to know what the biblical characteristics of a lead pastor are and what they look like. They should be able to discern if the characteristics are genuine in the man they choose. Man's solutions will always be insufficient. But God is gracious in revealing His will through His Word and answers to faithful prayer.

Questions to consider:

What does your prayer for your church's leadership look like? Do you pray for those who lead, serve and minister to the church body?

Do you know what the characteristics of an "Overseer" and "Deacon" are, and do you pray for them to grow and flourish in your church's leadership?

Is the leadership team a part of your prayer calendar at all?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the Pastor Search Team to have, and be in constant prayer for, the wisdom and discernment God gives to those who seek it faithfully.
- Pray specifically for the qualifications of the men who desire the position and that these Godly characteristics are found in our next lead pastor (1 Timothy 3).

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. James 3:13

DAY 7 – God’s Timing

*Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
Ephesians 5:17*

King David wanted to build a temple for his Lord. His intentions appeared to be pure and even the prophet Nathan agreed with David that it was a reasonable idea. He tells him, “Go and do all that is in your heart (2 Samuel 7).” David’s heart was concerned with what he could do for God. God had even called David “a man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14). Yet God, in regard to the temple, tells David “No.” How could this be? Any decision made without seeking God’s will, even decisions we make that we say are for God, are not glorifying God, but ourselves. God would have His temple built, but it was by the one He chose and in the time frame He chose.

Sometimes we think we know what is best with the best of intentions, but it is possible to sinfully serve the body of Christ. It is no accident that Paul, after pleading with the Roman church in Romans 12:1 to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God...” tells them “be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” It is important that God’s will be the focus of the Pastor Search Team and that the decision is made recognizing that the church belongs to the Lord. While we all, including the search team, have some idea in mind of how long the process should take, we must submit to God’s timing.

Questions to consider:

How often does a plea for the will of God to be done show up in your prayers? Do you pray for your own local church and the church as a whole to be focused on glorifying God first?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the Pastor Search Team to be constantly renewed by God’s Word to understand His will for the church.
- Pray for the Pastor Search Team to be in humble submission to the perfect will and perfect timing of God.

Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord! Psalm 27:14

DAY 8 – Being on guard

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:10-12

Whether we acknowledge it or not, we are in a battle, a spiritual battle. As we see throughout Scripture “the devil is a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The devil is vigilant and persistent with his hierarchy of demons to bring the most destructive purposes to those created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), especially those who are followers of Jesus Christ.

During this time our church must be on guard against any influence from Satan. The enemy wants nothing more than to see division among the church and for us to fall weak during this time of transition. It is important for us to remember that this is a spiritual battle and not one of flesh. We must fight this battle with spiritual warfare. Not just some of us, but all of us must be devoted to prayer for protection and provision around the search team and that all would be strong in the Lord and His mighty power. We must remember that we cannot battle on our own. Jesus has already won the victory, having disarmed principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15), and now that same victory can be ours through our Lord. “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” God’s strength is available to those who trust in Him. In Psalm 20:7 David writes, “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”

Questions to consider:

Am I praying for the protection of those making decisions for the church? Through these spiritual battles, am I trusting in my own strength or God’s?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the prevention of Satan’s influence in misleading or rushing the search team. (One of Satan’s tactics is deception.)
- Pray for a powerful hedge of protection around the team and their families.

DAY 9 – Being a Team Player

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Corinthians 1:10

Have you ever seen a rowing team perform? They are in perfect rhythm, perfect accord; they all have the same purpose and goal. Without such unity, they would be off course and never reach their destination or goal. The same should be the mindset of the congregation in the church.

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5-6).

As a church we have been called to bond in unity. We have been called to uplift, encourage, serve, love, and pray not only for one another but also for those who have been placed in authority within the church. The search team must not only seek unity amongst themselves, but the need to be surrounded by the unity of the church body.

Questions to consider:

Are you praying for unity within in the church and the decisions that are being made during this transition? Are you submitting to the will of God? Or, are you putting your wants above God’s will?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for God’s guidance in how the future pastor is presented to the church.
- Pray that there would be no division among the Pastor Search Team or the congregation.
- Pray for unity.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Acts 2:1

Day 10 – Grow in Humility

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

Read Philippians 2:3-11. In his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul exhorts the Christians there to be of the same mind, and to love others in the body of Christ with the same love. He then goes on to give what is the pinnacle example of humility by teaching the church body what it is to be humble. When we do anything of significance in God's Kingdom, we should put all matter of self away. We are experts at looking out for ourselves; therefore, in humility we not only cast our selfish desires aside, but also consider the needs of others as more important than our own. We have the ultimate example found in the Gospel, Jesus, being fully God, becoming a man, and humbling Himself even to point of death on the cross.

This kind of Christian humility makes our partnership in Gospel ministry all the more effective. We can go before God in prayer knowing full well that our prayers will be heard because our hearts are humble, and we seek to be of one mind. We do so with one kind of love, which is found in Christ Jesus. The Bible is filled with verses that mention humility. We can safely say that this is part of God's will for us.

Questions to consider:

How can we be obedient and humble ourselves so that we can become an effective resource for ministry in God's Kingdom? Knowing God's will, how can I put my own needs aside and imitate Christ's humility?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise our Lord Jesus for showing us the ultimate example of humility.
- Pray that God will humble you to the point of repentance so that your prayers may be heard before a holy and righteous God.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to think as one mind, in unity, and with the same kind of love.
- Pray for the Richland Creek Pastor Search Team, asking God for the correct people to be found and God's will be done.

Day 11 – Seek His Will

Read Jeremiah 29:13, James 4:8, Matthew 6:33

Scripture teaches us that our heart's desire is for the Lord because we were made to be His. However, our sin—that is, the evil desires of our hearts—leads us away from God and chases the worldly desires of our flesh. James says, "Our worldly passions are at war within us" (James 4:1). We "ask for things but do not receive them because we ask wrongly spending it on our passions" (James 4:3). There it is! We don't get what we want from God because we don't ask for the correct things! Our motivation comes from lust, greed, and covetousness. These are not the things that bring honor and glory to God but rather passions that come from an evil heart bent on self. Paul writes in Romans 8:5, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh."

So how should we ask? How should we form our prayers for the benefit of our church? Jesus gives us the answer, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). Of course, He is not talking about new cars, houses, or wealth. Jesus is saying that by seeking God's will, we can be sure to receive God's provisions. Why would God do this for us? He loves us through His grace and mercy. The extent of that love is summed up in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

Today let's ask of God with a right motive. As a church, let's pray that God's will be done for Richland Creek. Let's find God by seeking Him with all our hearts.

Questions to consider:

How can I come before God, asking Him correctly for the things that my heart truly desires? How can I look to seek God's kingdom before my own needs are met?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God will help us to put away all lust, greed, and covetousness and seek Him and His kingdom with all our hearts.
- Pray for one another as we struggle with our own worldly desires.
- Pray that we draw closer to God and seek Him more than a new pastor.

And God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Day 12 – Confess All Sin

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Psalm 139:23-24

Is there anything that God does not know about us? It's no surprise to God that saved people still carry sin in their hearts, even sin that we are unaware of. Calvin writes, "David's meaning simply is, that though he was a man subject to sin, he was not devotedly bent upon the practice of it." Like King David, we should be praying to God daily to search our hearts for any unrighteousness.

Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." To the unbeliever this is of no consequence. To the believer it should bring us to our knees, seeking at every turn to avoid what we know is true—sin still dwells within us.

The struggle with sin will be with us for the rest of our lives. In Romans 7:18 Paul writes, "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." What a relief it is that the Gospel tells us we have someone working on our behalf before God. He intercedes for us to the Father. Having been saved, we abide in Christ and He abides in us. God is also working in us, never allowing us to be tempted beyond what we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13). We always have a way to escape our sin.

Questions to consider:

Is there anything in your heart, thoughts, or memory that would be an offense to God? Have we asked Him to reveal sin in our lives? Have we confessed our sin?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would search your heart for any sin past, present or future.
- Pray Psalm 66:18 Confess any hidden sin that you are holding on to.
- Pray for others who may be struggling with unrepentant sin.
- Praise God for His love, grace, and mercy because of Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:25

DAY 13 – Commit Passionately

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lamp stands, says this: “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” Revelation 2:1-4

Here we see a partial assessment of the early churches. We would be wise to heed the wisdom and warning.

What an opportunity we have during our transition time and sheltering at home. It gives time to refocus both personally and as a Church. Maybe you’ve been able to purge the clutter at home. Clutter, the things you don’t really need or want, can allow you to lose focus on what matters. The process of ridding ourselves of clutter is usually a struggle; however, with diligence and cleanliness it is easily achieved.

How do we combat evil clutter in our spiritual lives? We have to remember how our relationship with Jesus first began; it was just you and He. You were taking your first steps to knowing more of Him; hopefully through a commitment to prayer, study, and worship, followed by serving, giving, and sharing the Gospel. A renewed zeal and focus in these areas are paramount to a healthy relationship going forward.

We can’t allow ourselves to be passive, personally or corporately. If Christ is worth anything, He’s worth everything! It’s impossible to please God from a neutral position. There is no middle ground for a faithful believer.

Questions to consider:

Have you assessed your walk with Christ lately? What does spiritual “clutter” look like in your life? What steps could you take to purge the clutter and refocus on your first love, Jesus?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for consistency and focus on the Gospel in church ministry.
- Pray for God’s power to be upon our interim pastor and our staff.
- Pray for protection from any spirit of being lukewarm or losing our first love.
- Pray for protection from the evil one and remind us that we serve Jesus.

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. Revelation 3:15

Day 14 – Community Minded

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. John 13:34

Community is a common word we use in churches today. It's engraved in our very church's name. Have you ever considered if we represent the word well?

A community should have devotion to live, support, and grow together. The point of this isn't just to meet and connect on a Sunday morning. It is to move forward, to do life together. It isn't based on proximity, but purpose. The best friendships are ones that help each other grow closer to Jesus.

As we invest in discipleship with one another, we will begin to grow and reflect the love of Jesus. The commandment to love others isn't reserved for inside the walls of church. His desire is for us to reach our geographic community with love. If we unite with purpose driven love, we will cultivate community with strong disciples that reach those far from God.

A quote to remember is "Saved people Serve people." Our primary duty as a congregation is to represent the Gospel well—not just at church but also in the community surrounding us.

Questions to consider:

Am I self-focused or Christ-focused with a desire to serve others? How can I help cultivate a community of Christ-centered love?

Prayer Prompts

- Pray for a miraculous sense of love and unity among all members of the church.
- Pray for a surrender of all bitterness, division and anger within our church family.
- Ask God to empower us to love one another with a patient, forgiving love.

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. John 17:20-21

Day 15 – Walk in Unity

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
1 Corinthians 1:10

Richland Creek is in an unusual season. We are dealing with a time of transition and a global pandemic. We are not meeting together as we normally do, and that is difficult. How should we handle this? The verse above calls us to unity—unity of vision, unity of mission, and unity of call.

Paul reminds the Corinthians in verse 9 they are called by God to fellowship in Christ. Remember that nothing the Creek is enduring right now has taken Christ by surprise. Not this transition. Not this pandemic. So, what is to be our response? Be unified in mission, calling, doctrine, and prayer! Be a disciple that makes disciples! Not only does this not take God by surprise, He knows exactly what He is doing. He knows our struggles. He knows how this will shape and help us. He knows who is coming to pastor the Creek. Let us unify under His will and His wants!

Questions to consider:

What wants and desires do I have for the future of the Creek that I need to surrender to the Lord?

What preconceived ideas have I taken to the Lord, trying to sway His plan for the Creek?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our own part in unity and for corporate unity in calling the new lead pastor.
- Pray our church would receive him and his family with deep love.
- Pray for revival and spiritual awakening as we move into the future.
- Pray for unity, grace, and strength for the church that our new pastor will be leaving.

Day 16 – Strive to Create Harmony

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:1-6

Verse three uses the word “endeavor.” That word means “to exert oneself, make effort, or to labor.” We are called to work toward the unity of the Spirit, bearing with one another in love, with humility, and as Paul says, “worthy of the calling with which you were called.”

During this period of transition, we know that change is coming. New pastor. New ideas. We are called to endeavor toward unity in the Spirit. How? At the end of Ephesians 3 Paul states, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” We have to remember that the purpose of the church is to bring glory to Christ Jesus, to all generations, and that He is able to do far more than we can think or imagine. Think of the greatest thing that can happen at Richland Creek through this time. Now realize that through a unified body of believers, Christ can do so much more than that!!!

Questions to consider:

Am I working toward unity, or do any of my actions breed discontent?
How would my spouse answer that?

How would my pastors / life group leaders / ministry directors answer that?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for diligence in working toward unity, and for brothers and sisters at the Creek to mend any division within the body.
- Pray for unity of all ministries, focused on bringing glory to Christ in all endeavors.
- Pray we would be prepared to make the necessary changes to embrace a new day of ministry.

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

Day 17 – Waiting on the Lord

This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him." Lamentations 3:21–25

To this day I can hear songs from high school, and remember every word. I can go back to that specific time and place, and remember who was there and exactly what was happening. And the funny thing is it really doesn't matter what is happening in the present, that song will take me back to the past in a moment.

We can do the same, by choice, during tough times, only with a higher purpose. We can recall what the Lord has done for us, how much He loves us, how many times He shows us His love. We remember how He ultimately demonstrated His love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Remember that childlike faith when you were newly saved? Remember that time when only God showing up could provide that specific need, and God showed up?

Why would we choose to dwell in uncertainty? Why not choose to recall that God's mercies give us hope and His compassion never fails? He is good to those who wait on Him. He has shown us over and over that He wants the best for us, and that He is never late! Let us choose to wait on Him, and His chosen servant.

Questions to consider:

Am I surrendered to God's timeline as we work toward God's man coming to pastor Richland Creek? Am I stressed out wondering what is going on and how long will this take?

Prayer Prompts:

- Philippians 4:6-7, Ask God to help me be anxious for nothing!
- Jeremiah 29:11, God, help me remember You have a plan for us!
- Proverbs 16:9, Father, we make our plans, but please God, directs our steps!

Day 18 – Bondservant of Christ

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:3-11

Let's define a few words.

Conceit: vain glory, or empty pride.

Lowliness of mind: a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness.

Bondservant: someone devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.

As we look to the future, and seek a pastor to come and lead the Creek, we will find it within ourselves to want what we want. Maybe it's a pastor who looks a certain way, or who doesn't look a certain way. Maybe we like a particular accent, or not. Maybe he preaches a certain way, from a certain version of Scripture, from a particular seminary, with specific degrees. Scripture calls this empty pride. In other words, I want what I want, how I want it, and when I want it! Rather, Scripture tells us we are to humble ourselves. We are to devote ourselves to Christ, and His desires for the Creek. We are to get out of our own way and submit ourselves to the will of Christ for the future of His church.

Questions to consider:

Am I a bondservant, with the mind of Christ? Have I sought God's will for my life, my ministry, and this church as a whole? Or am I demanding what I want, when I want it?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that we all will be bondservants to Christ. That we will surrender our will to His, setting aside our individual expectations for the new pastor and decide in unity who God is calling to the Creek.
- Pray that the man God is calling to the Creek will surrender to the will of Christ and follow that call.

Day 19 – Aligning your Desires with His

Many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand. Proverbs 19:21

Some churches struggle with wanting a pastor who is like their previous pastor. Others desire someone who is just the opposite. Pray that all would be receptive to God's direction in doing a new thing in the congregation and accept His perfect will above our own desires.

We know God has a plan, and it is perfect for His will to be done. We need to align our desires to His will in all things. That is easier said than done. However, when we rest in Him and follow the examples of our Lord and Savior Jesus we become more aligned with His will. Let's align ourselves with the Word of God and be guided by it daily.

In Isaiah 46:10, we learn God's counsel will stand and His purpose will be accomplished. Let's align our hearts and desires to it. "Declaring the end from the beginning and the from ancient times, things not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose" (Isaiah 46:10).

Questions to consider:

Am I seeking God's plan or my personal desire for a new senior pastor?

Am I praying for the Pastor Search Team to seek God's counsel and supporting them wholeheartedly?

Prayer Prompts:

- God, give wisdom to our Pastor Search Team. May their heart's desires be aligned with your will, and may we, the church, come alongside them and support and encourage them to glorify you.
- Pray we all would be receptive to God's doing a new thing in the congregation and accept His perfect will above our own desires.

"Real prayer is communion with God, so that there will be common thoughts between His mind and ours. What is needed is for Him to fill our hearts with His thoughts and then His desires will become our desires flowing back to Him." - Arthur W. Pink

Day 20 – Submit to Authority

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning. For that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. Hebrews 13:17-18

The author of Hebrews commands us to obey and submit to our leaders in verse 17. Earlier in the chapter he reminds us how they hold to the Word and that we are to be imitators of their faith in Jesus. God has sovereignly placed Word-driven leaders in our lives. They not only guide us and point us to Jesus, but also protect us from false doctrines and “wolves” that would seek to destroy.

When we willingly obey and submit to our leader’s authority it produces joy and not strife or groaning. It brings function and unity to the body. This authority comes at a price; for they will have to give an account before God for those they led. Therefore, let us encourage them, pray for them, and be patient with them. Let us respect and honor their choices in regard to the Pastor Search Team and the direction of Richland Creek.

Questions to consider:

Am I submitting to the authorities God has placed in my life?

Am I encouraging, praying for, and honoring those who are leading me and pointing me to Christ?

Do I bring joy to my pastors and leaders, or do I selfishly complain?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the church as a whole would trust the Pastor Search Team through the process of finding a new lead pastor.
- Pray the congregation would trust the Pastor Search Team is being led by the Spirit as they search for the man God is bringing to Richland Creek, and there will be no division.

Day 21 – To Have Passion and Boldness

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Earlier in this letter, Paul affirmed for Timothy God as the source of Scripture and Scripture's usefulness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In Matthew, Jesus says the Word of God is the source of man's spiritual life. Since the Word of God is holy, the matter of preaching the Word is no small thing. Using courtroom language in 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul testifies of these truths to Timothy and all future pastors.

We can only love and desire the Word by God's grace. The world will reject it. And even Christians, at times, will struggle to desire it when it convicts. The temptation exists for a pastor to appease us. A pastor faces the world that hates the Word, and generations that call themselves Christians, but deny truth. He faces his ego, pressure to put numbers above God's Word, and pressure to not offend. When a pastor gives in and carries this weight with him to the pulpit, he no longer preaches the Word of God, but his own version of truth, attempting to make everyone happy.

A lead pastor who loves the Word will know to leave that weight at the foot of cross, will make no compromises to truth, and will preach and teach it in the face of affliction, suffering, or persecution. As believers, we need Scripture and the gospel preached boldly by a man who loves God more than he fears man.

Questions to consider:

What are the qualities you look for in a lead pastor? Do you listen to walk away feeling better or to expand your understanding of the object of your faith, Jesus Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would increase our next lead pastor's passion for preaching the Word of God.
- Pray that our next lead pastor will boldly proclaim the truth without compromise.

Day 22 – To Have Christ-like and Discernment

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:3-11

Most of us would not choose “joy” as the word we would use to describe how time in prison must feel. Yet, here, Paul is writing to the Philippians from a Roman jail, and he only writes one sentence before he mentions his joy. He is joyous due to their partnership in the gospel, as partakers of the same grace. Paul is confident enough to call on God as a witness to this truth as seen in a paraphrased portion of this Scripture by Adam Clarke: “I call God to witness that I have the strongest affection for you, and that I love you with that same kind of tender concern with which Christ loved the world when He gave Himself for it.”

This is what we should desire for our lead pastor: that he would love the church and his congregation like Christ does. We should desire he would find joy in serving and partnering with the body of Christ in the gospel, a joy that he could attest before God even in the worst of situations. We should desire that our next lead pastor seek the will of God in leaving another church body, and possibly a home, to serve in this new role. He and his family must make this decision for God's glory first and foremost.

Questions to consider:

Where does our ultimate source of joy come from? Would you consider yourself joyful? Do you seek joy for yourself and pray for it for others?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would give our next lead pastor a love for our church and strength to leave his current position.
- Pray that God would make His will known to our next lead pastor and his family.

DAY 23 – To Have Fervency and Perseverance

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Romans 12:9-13

Have you ever done anything that you were just boiling over with excitement about and couldn't wait to see what was going to happen next? Paul, in Romans 12:9-13, tells believers that the Christian life should have that boiling, fervent spirit. MacArthur says it should be "plenty of heat to produce adequate, productive energy, but not so much heat that one goes out of control." A passion for the Gospel and living a life of Christ-likeness should engulf every believer.

As we look at characteristics for a lead pastor: fervency, zeal, and energy for God and His people need to be very evident in his life. His focus should passionately be God's glory through loving God and loving others.

Does it mean he won't get tired or face trials? No. In fact, Paul addresses that by urging perseverance through tribulations. One who is devoting to prayer, rejoicing in the hope we have in Christ, and giving of themselves to serve others will find strength and energy that can only come from God. Careful though, this zeal, this "boiling spirit" can and should be contagious. We should be fueled by our pastor's fervency to love God and love people.

Questions to consider:

Do I have a "boiling spirit" for the Gospel and Jesus? Do I get energized in my walk when I see my pastor's zeal?

How can I come alongside my pastors to help energize them for the sake of the Gospel?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would cause our lead pastor to be devoted to constant prayer.
- Pray that God would give our lead pastor fervency and passion for ministry.
- Pray that God would cultivate a deep perseverance within our new lead pastor.

DAY 24 – To Know and Do God’s Will

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

What are you going to do when you grow up? Many of us were asked that when we were younger (some of us still get asked that from time to time). Mostly our answer was, “I don’t know.” Often our answer to “What is God’s will?” is the same ... “I don’t know.” Paul, however, tells us that we can prove what the will of God is. How? We “present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice.” He goes on to tell us what that looks like. Paul says not to act like the world, but to be transformed by renewing your mind. This renewal only happens through the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the continual study of God’s Word. To know and prove God’s will is to study, know, and live out His Word.

How can our lead pastor know God’s will for himself, his family, and our church body? He passionately studies the Word of God and allows the Holy Spirit to renew his mind through his study. To lead in a manner, holy and acceptable to God, he will sacrifice himself for the sake of knowing and doing God’s will. His life will not show conformity to the things of this world, but reflect a pursuit of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Questions to consider:

Have you presented yourself as a living sacrifice, laying aside worldly pursuits?

Do you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind by studying God’s Word deeply? Is God’s will important to you?

Prayer Prompts:

Pray that God would cause our lead pastor to be devoted to constant Bible Study.

Pray that God would give our lead pastor clear direction and calling to lead our church according to the will of God.

Pray that God would bring certainty to our lead pastor and his family as they seek His will together.

DAY 25 – To Find Strength in Weakness

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

In the hills of California is a certain seed; in fact, there are potentially millions of these seeds. They seem weak and unresponsive due to their hardened shell that keeps them from growing. However, as fire rips through the mountainside, the pressure and intense heat of the destructive blaze breaks open the seed’s shell, allowing the Fire Poppy to take root and spring forth. The poppy not only brings refreshed beauty to a desolate land, but also nourishes and strengthens the ground to enable great growth. Its perceived weakness becomes great strength and refreshment.

As Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, he realized a similar beauty. He begged for his weaknesses to be taken away. God’s response ... “My grace is sufficient...” It was then Paul realized the true beauty of his weakness. It was through his infirmity, trials, and difficulties that the grace and strength of Christ could shine through. Through Christ’s strength he was able to lead the church.

No one is perfect. We all have significant weaknesses. How do we embrace them? Is it with frustration and anxiety or with contentment, knowing that the power of Christ dwells within us? A lead pastor is one who acknowledges his weaknesses yet allows the power of Christ to strengthen him as he leads. He knows God’s grace is sufficient for all of life.

Questions to consider:

Do we sulk in our weaknesses and trials? Do we find contentment in the grace poured out on us by Jesus? How can I come alongside my pastors in their weakness and boast in the power of Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would allow our lead pastor to know his weaknesses and to allow Christ into those weaknesses so His strength may shine through.
- Pray that God would bring contentment in His grace to the church that our lead pastor is leaving.
- Pray they would embrace the vacancy in such a way that the strength of Christ can be seen in their transition.
- Pray that God would spur us all to grow fully content in the sufficiency of His grace.

DAY 26 – To Be Dedicated to God's Word

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:8-9

As we read these verses, it is plain to see that God is commanding Joshua to be a man deeply dedicated to the Word of God. This command comes as part of a commissioning to lead Israel into the Promise Land. Moses has passed on and Joshua is now the one who will guide God's people. It won't be easy. He faces difficult battles and decisions to be made in those battles. God knows this, so He reminds Joshua of His promises: Study My Word. Be strong. Be courageous. I am with you! Wherever you go, I am with you!

A lead pastor should definitely be a man dedicated to the Word. He meditates on it. He memorizes it. He draws his strength and courage from God through His Word. His delight is the presence of God as he dwells in the Word.

Psalm 1:1-2 says, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

Questions to Consider:

Are we a people of the Word? If so, am I meditating on His Word daily?

Do I try to take control of things myself rather than turning to the Lord in reliance upon Him?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that our future pastor is a passionate man of the Word.
- Pray that our future pastor meditates daily on the Word of God.
- Pray that his delight in the Word would give him strength and courage.

DAY 27 – To be Fully Dependent on God

And He said to His disciples, For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his lifespan? If you cannot do a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? Luke 12:22-26

Worry is very destructive. The word anxious in Luke 12:22 means: “to be torn apart.” By allowing worry and anxiety to take hold in our lives, it tears us apart. Worry is also quite deceptive, giving us a false view of life. Worry can convince us that life is made up of what we eat and what we wear. We get so consumed with the means that we forget about the end, which is to glorify God in all that we do. Worry will blind us to the way God cares for all His creation. The Lord here in these verses is encouraging us to trust and rely solely upon Him.

As we think about the important decisions our future pastor and his family must make, stress and worry can easily accompany them. However, if their reliance is completely on the One who sustains them, they will see that their value is far greater than the birds. We as the church should make ourselves available as instruments in the hands of the Sustainer, ready to care for the ones He sends us.

Questions to consider:

Are there things causing worry and stress in my life? Has that worry and stress taken my focus off God and placed it on myself?

Have I taken it to the Lord in prayer? How can I join with the church body to care for our pastors?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that any worry and anxiousness felt by our future lead pastor and his family would all be given to the Lord through prayer.
- Pray for a comfort and a peace that surpasses all understanding with all decisions being made by our future lead pastor and his family.
- Pray that the future lead pastor and his family have a smooth transition to Richland Creek.

DAY 28 – To Watch Over the Flock

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28

In Acts 20, Paul urges the elders of the Ephesian church to be on guard. False teaching, false doctrines, “fierce wolves” as Jesus would put it, all seek to destroy sound Biblical truth. The elders must guard against this. They must first be willing to self-examine their own walk. How does their own life compare to the truth of Scripture? Effective ministry is not a mere outward activity; it is the overflow of a deep, personal relationship with God and a passion for the truth of His Word.

The elders are then called to guard the flock, the people placed under their authority and direction. Flock, shepherd, and wolves are all terms that bring the idea of hard work, sweat, and vigilance. As shepherds, our lead pastor and elders will feed, care for, and guard the flock, a flock that holds great value, purchased by the blood of Jesus. As shepherds, they do not stand on the outside looking in, but are in the midst, proactively working with and guarding the believers in their care.

Questions to Consider:

Am I guarding myself? Am I consistently examining my walk with Christ and pressing it up against Scripture?

Am I submissive to the authority and protection of our elders?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that our future lead pastor has a love and desire to protect the congregation.
- Pray we would come alongside him and his family – praying for their needs of friendship, housing, schooling, etc. as they settle in. Pray for the stresses of their transition.
- Pray the new pastor and his family would feel at home at Richland Creek.

“A minister may fill pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more.” - John Owen

DAY 29 – Pastor’s Wife to be a Faithful Companion

Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.
Psalm 73:25-28

Earlier in Psalm 73, evildoers seem to have it easy, while the faithful struggle. Yet, time in communion with God gave the Psalmist an eternal perspective of the truth of God’s goodness – a viewpoint we may pray specifically over our pastor’s wife.

True knowledge and worship of God leads to other desires paling in comparison to our yearning to be near Him. The very presence of God is to be a peace giving sanctuary – for our pastor’s family and each Christian. To shelter in Him gives strength, satisfaction, and sustaining grace like no other relationship could.

The things of this world will fail, but our eternal God never does. He is our rock and our salvation. What hope we have from our good, always near God! May we declare the best place to be is walking with the Lord, sheltered by His might.

Questions to consider:

Do I cherish God above all else? Do I view my time with Him as dwelling in a refreshing sanctuary? Could God call me anywhere and I be content in Him?

Prayer Prompts:

While realizing our next pastor may not be married or may be a widower, pray for his wife should he be married:

- That God would be her greatest treasure and comfort.
- Her relationship with God would encourage her husband, doing him good. (Proverbs 31:12)
- God would give her strength as her husband’s helper (Genesis 2:18).
- God would protect their marriage and strengthen their unity.
- God would grant her peace through the transition.
- Our church body would embrace their family well.

DAY 30 – Pastor’s Wife to be a Godly Example

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Titus 2:3-5

Though these verses specifically address women, the surrounding verses 1-8 and the use of the word “likewise” reveals many of the same general expectations of men and women. All of the characteristics are to be rooted in and flowing from sound doctrine.

In verse 3, we see God’s expectations of more mature women. However, when we look at verses 4-5, we realize the older women cannot teach the younger women something they do not already know and do. So, even though some characteristics are age-specific, these are all aims of Godly character as women grow in Christ-likeness.

What does a maturing woman look like? She exhibits surrender to the Lord by being dignified, honest, self-controlled, a good caregiver of her family, blameless, marked by kindness and respect, teachable, and a trainer of other women in these things. Her “why” is important. This is not for her recognition. She embodies these traits so God is honored and the gospel goes forth.

Questions to consider:

Is God’s glory my chief aim? Do others observe these characteristics in me? In which area do I struggle the most? Am I intentionally coming alongside someone younger for his or her spiritual good?

Prayer Prompts:

While realizing our next pastor may not be married or may be a widower, pray for his wife should he be married:

- God would be glorified as she radiates Christ-likeness.
- God would provide her with deep Godly relationships with women.
- God would give her joy in the use of her spiritual gift.
- She would be a source of stability for her family during this time of transition.

Extra Day – Unified with Staff and Church Family

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. Psalm 133:1

It is always difficult to step into a leadership role from the outside. It's just as difficult for a group of people, who have been working together for years, to invite someone new to lead them. As believers, however, there is a unity that already binds us together. We are all family in Christ. We are brothers and sisters who are bound to the common goals—Love God and Love People. This is how we differ from the rest of culture. This bond is what gives us strength and the ability to truly enjoy the goodness of unity.

Ephesians 4:3 “to be diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”

As our future lead pastor comes to work alongside our other pastors, elders, deacons and ministry leaders, we must be diligent to preserve unity. We must be diligent to maintain the bond of peace that is only found through Christ Jesus.

Through unity and the bond of family, the church leadership will be able to unite and guide us with the wisdom that only God can grant, guarded by a peace that only He can give.

Questions to consider:

Is there anything in my life that would cause disunity among the brethren? Am I thankful for my church family? How may I better pursue unity?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for a spirit of unity amongst the future lead pastor and all leadership within the church.
- Pray for humble hearts, unity, wisdom, and peace amongst the church body. Praying for revival in the hearts of the church family.

Thank You Church

To all who contributed to make this prayer guide possible.
To God be the glory!

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”
1 Thessalonians 5:12-13