

[From the Bishop: Pray As You Go](#)

Friends, in 2023, let's commit to do our personal interior and spiritual work. Think about your own life story. Attend the brokenness of your own story. Let me tell you, that's how it works, and why this is so important in our life together as church! So, hopefully, you've been able to see a portion of my backstory, and if you haven't watched that video, [it's right here on our North Carolina Conference website](#). I've shared where my broken places are... and now I encourage YOU to reflect on your story to heighten your awareness of where your broken places are... because what happens when we as church throw all our brokenness into one place and then Covid brings isolation, and our beloved United Methodist Church has theological differences, we end up with the perfect storm. Our isolation and brokenness bring pain and fear to the surface. Pay attention to your feelings. Be in touch with your emotions. I have a personal rule: if I'm angry with three people at the same time, it's probably my problem. I am not saying that should be your rule for your life. You may be in an oppressive situation and may justifiably be angry with many more than three people at the same time. But I have assessed my own emotional health and have admitted that if I am blood boiling angry with three different people or situations at the same time, the problem is not with the others. The problem is inside me. Oh, how I wish that was the end of it once I became aware of it. But it's not. I then have to do my personal interior work with a therapist or counselor or spiritual director to identify what in my past brokenness is connected with my present posture or anger or fear. And alongside that work, I practice my spiritual disciplines to shine light into my dark places.

I'm going to encourage us to journey together in 2023 by attending to our lives of prayer. I am not asking you to do a prayer study to increase your knowledge. I am not asking you to read a book on prayer. I am asking YOU to be present with God as God is present with you. And, as a church consider, how might we shape the next generation toward lives of prayer? There's a resource I want to commend to you. You can find it online, or you

can download the app. It's simply called, "Pray As You Go". "Pray As You Go." We often move through our prayer lives, and our Bible readings and reflection with such haste. We forget the purpose is to experience God... to encounter God... to hear from God. This audio resource slows us down. In your Internet browser, type in prayasyougo.org. Once you get to the website, you will click on "Daily Meditation." You'll receive an audio-guided reflection by gentle narrators who guide the time of prayer. Be still and listen to scripture and listen to God. If you would prefer to use the app, download "Pray As You Go" on your mobile device. On the app, you'll tap "Daily Moment."

What if every layperson and every pastor in our entire North Carolina United Methodist Conference committed to listen to God by practicing daily prayer with the guidance of "Pray As You Go." For those who enjoy written text, you can also click on the website or the app and read the text instead of listen to the audio. The goal is that we are still, listening, and practicing prayer. Equally exciting, for those of you who can access the website or the app, especially those of you who are in relationship with young adults and students, share this tool for engaging the next generation. We'd love to know that you're participating so if you want to commit to do this each day — pick your time: morning, noon, afternoon, night, alone, with a friend, with a family member, a small group — just let us know by [joining on our website at the link below](#).

Pray As You Go... may we open ourselves to our ever-present God — creator, redeemer, and sustainer.