

## A Simple Guide to the Means of Grace



John Wesley taught that while God's grace is unearned we are not to be passive in waiting to experience grace. We are to engage the means of grace - ways God works within us to shape and form us to be more like Christ.

Some refer to these as spiritual disciplines and they are not unique to United Methodists. The various means of grace can be divided into acts of piety (devotional practices) and the acts of mercy (works extending outward for the sake of others).

A balance of piety and mercy allows our faith to become active in the world and not simply a selfish discipline that bears no influence on behavior.

Wesley was very much aware that an individualistic faith was not healthy, and emphasized a second balance between individual and communal means of grace.

This brief guide to the means of grace outlines opportunities to engage some of these practices through Saint Paul's United Methodist Church.





## Acts of Piety

### Individual Practices of piety:

- reading, meditating and studying the scriptures
- prayer
- fasting
- regularly attending worship
- healthy living
- sharing our faith with others

### Communal Practices of piety:

- regularly share in the sacraments
- Christian conferencing; accountability to one another for spiritual growth and encouragement
- Bible study



## Acts of Mercy

### Individual Practices of mercy:

- doing good works
- visiting the sick
- visiting those in prison
- feeding the hungry
- giving generously to the needs of others

### Communal Practices of mercy:

- seeking justice
- ending oppression and discrimination
- addressing the needs of the poor





## Reading, Meditating & Studying Scripture

As United Methodists, we believe that the Bible is the inspired way that God speaks to us through ancient texts and agree with the historic claim that it 'contains all things necessary for salvation.' We interpret Scripture through the lens of reason, tradition and experience and we study in order be shaped and guided by it. We encourage small groups to read and discuss scripture together, and offer a **Daily Bible Reading** devotional that is distributed by email. Would you like to subscribe? Click [here](#).



## Prayer

*"All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God."*  
(John Wesley)

For United Methodists, prayer is a practice through which we experience the presence and grace of God. In prayer we open ourselves to the power of God's love that heals and forms us into the image of Christ. Prayer involves both speaking and listening... we talk to God and God talks to us.

There are many ways to pray, and we will at times offer classes on various methods of prayer.

You can join us online for live stream morning and evening prayer on Wednesdays as we offer prayers for our needs and the needs of the world. Our pastors are always available to pray with you as the need arises.

You can submit a prayer request [here](#).

## Sharing Your Faith

Okay, I know that this is a scary one, because it conjures up images of street preachers and making a general nuisance of yourself at social gatherings. To be honest, there are better and more effective ways to share your faith. Do what Jesus did—get to know people and relate to them authentically and without an agenda.

One way that we share our faith is by working with children and youth in our congregation and community through mentoring programs and teaching. If you love kids and want to make a difference - join us!



Saint Paul's UMC offers many ways to engage and grow in your faith!

- Worship opportunities
- multiple ministries of mercy and justice in our community and around the world
- participate in creation care
- become a part of a small group study or Sunday School class
- share your faith with children and/or youth
- support the mission and ministry of the church - Saint Paul's supports many of our local community organizations that are doing good everyday

[www.saintpaulsumc.org](http://www.saintpaulsumc.org)