The background of the cover is a photograph of a turbulent sea under a dark, stormy sky. A bright light, possibly the sun or moon, is breaking through the clouds on the left side, creating a dramatic contrast with the dark water and sky. The waves are dark and churning, with white foam visible at the base of the breaking wave.

BE STILL AND KNOW

Forty Day Prayer Guide
for the Members of
First United Methodist Church

To the Beloved Members of First United Methodist Church:

This Discernment Guide has been prayerfully and intentionally created to empower our church membership to answer a call to fasting and prayer.

In this guide, it is recommended that we fast together on Mondays. As you are able, skip breakfast and lunch and spend that time in prayer. This fast is a means of grace to help focus spiritually on discernment at the start of your week. You may choose to fast in some other way, as you feel led by the Lord.

For more information on Fasting:

<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/fasting>

For more information on Prayer:

<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/a-simple-way-to-pray>

It is my prayer that we be united in prayer and fasting during these forty days so we might be spiritually strengthened to listen to God and to one another as we navigate this time of discernment. I am praying for you and I ask that you pray for me as we open our hearts and seek what God has in store for this incredible body of faith.

Blessings,

Rev Amanda Stratton



WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

Discern: anakrino (Greek); to distinguish, to separate out by diligent search, to examine.

Discernment is closely related to wisdom. It helps us make good decisions in alignment with the will of God. It is a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit, God-given knowledge, and how to apply that knowledge in the right way. Discernment is the ability to see things for what they really are and not for what you want them to be. The heart of spiritual discernment is being able to distinguish the voice of the world from the voice of God.

The Bible instructs us over and over again to pray for discernment from God. We develop spiritual discernment by meditating, listening, praising, studying, and reading Scripture. The more we meditate on Scripture (God's Word), the more in tune we will be with God's Ways.

As we individually and collectively pray through these 40 days, let's be intentional and attentive to the Spirit of God as we intercede for our faith family, our community, and our future. We will ask the Lord for mutual love and unity, wisdom, guidance, faith, hope, increasing revelation and understanding, clarity of our shared mission, provision for that mission, and that we may be faithful and effective witnesses of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

A Promise from Jesus to His Disciples:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.—John 16:13



“Discernment is God’s call to intercession, never to fault finding.” – Corrie Ten Boom

SEPTEMBER 1ST (THURSDAY)

Morning - Read Acts 6:3. Pray that God will raise up women and men “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” to lead us in the coming days.

Evening - Read Proverbs 12:15. Pray for the desire and skill to listen carefully to God and to one another.

SEPTEMBER 2ND (FRIDAY)

Morning - Read Proverbs 1:7. Take some time to acknowledge the Lord; He is holy and righteous and worthy of all praise. Open yourself up, in all humility, to seek His wisdom and accept His discipline.

Evening Read Proverbs 2:3-5. Pray that our ears would be open to the Word of the Lord and those around us and that each one of us would be still and know that He is God.

SEPTEMBER 3RD (SATURDAY)

Morning - Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Pray that we would remain faithful to the teachings of the holy Scriptures and continue to pass those teachings on to our children and their children.

Evening - Read Psalm 119:125. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand the commands of God so that we would be good servants and obedient children. Pray for a deeper understanding of God’s loving boundaries.



SEPTEMBER 4TH (SUNDAY)

Morning - Read Philippians 1:9. Pray for more and more love overflowing and spilling out to those around us. Ask that we would keep on growing in knowledge and understanding as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Evening - Read 1 Kings 4:29. Pray for godly wisdom and understanding; for every member (young and old), for our leaders, for the Church Council, and for our collective faith family.

SEPTEMBER 5TH (MONDAY)

Breakfast - Read Matthew 6:9-13. Pray the Lord's Prayer throughout the day, focusing on the corporate needs and direction of our church.

Lunch - Read Romans 8:28. Give thanks for the purposes of God. Ask for revelation and clarity of God's purposes for us as a faith family.

SEPTEMBER 6TH (TUESDAY)

Morning: Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Cry out for the wisdom of God to be poured out upon all the members of our church family.

Evening: Read Romans 15:5-6. Pray for God to reign in our hearts, minds, and actions so that we would live in complete harmony with one another, giving praise and glory to God.



SEPTEMBER 7TH (WEDNESDAY)

Morning: Read Colossians 3:12-17. Pray against any bitterness and unforgiveness and ask for God to release His mercy and forgiveness through all.

Evening: Read Matthew 5:44-47. Pray against any divisiveness and anger. Repent any unforgiveness in your heart. Ask God to turn up the volume of His love in you.

REFLECTIONS:

“God does not exist to answer our prayers, but by our prayers, we come to discern the mind of God.” – Oswald Chambers



SEPTEMBER 8TH (THURSDAY)

Mornings: Read 1 Peter 2:17. Ask for respect and kindness to fill all members of our body and our church leaders.

Evening: Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Lift up all the members of our church family with supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving.

SEPTEMBER 9TH (FRIDAY):

Morning: Read Ezekiel 22:30. Ask the Father to burden His people into intercession and seeking His face.

Evening: Read Psalm 32:8. Pray that our ears will be opened to listen and hear and that our hearts will be opened to receive the instruction of the Lord.

SEPTEMBER 10TH (SATURDAY)

Morning: Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Pray for a release of control and for complete trust in the Lord with all our hearts.

Evening: Read Isaiah 41:10. Stand against any fear that may be taking root and pray that we are strengthened in heart and spirit by the Lord.

SEPTEMBER 11TH (SUNDAY)

Morning: Read Psalm 103:7. Ask the Father to make known His ways, plans, and purposes to us just as He did to Moses and the people of Israel.

Evening: Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6. Lift up all members of our church with supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving. May we stay alert, awake, and clearheaded.



SEPTEMBER 12TH (MONDAY)

Breakfast: Read John 8:31-32. Pray that we will know the truth and have hearts that are willing to obey. Help us to be disciples who are set free by the truth of Jesus Christ.

Lunch: Read Matthew 5:11-16. Pray that God bless us with clarity of communication, understanding, wisdom, and a sense of His direction as we learn more about the current situation in the United Methodist Church and its impact on local churches. May we boldly be Kingdom salt and light for God's glory and praise.

SEPTEMBER 13TH (TUESDAY)

Morning: Read Psalm 30:11. Ask the Father to comfort those that are mourning and turn their mourning into joy. May the Spirit clothe us with joy and set our feet to dancing.

Evening: Read Hebrews 11. Ask that the Lord Jesus cause faith to find root, and grow in our hearts, that we will walk by faith trusting in God.



SEPTEMBER 14TH (WEDNESDAY)

Morning: Read James 1:5-7. Ask for the wisdom of the Lord to prevail within our hearts and minds as we discern which stream of Methodism fits the mission of our church best. Pray for the Town Hall Meeting this evening at 7 pm. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us generate good questions together that will guide us in the right direction.

Evening: Read Philippians 4:6-7. Ask the Father to lead the people of this church to cast their cares and anxieties on Him and place the direction of our church into His hands. Pray for the Town Hall Meeting tomorrow morning at 10 am. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us generate good questions together that will guide us in the right direction.

REFLECTIONS:



“This is a time when all of God’s people need to keep their eyes and their Bibles wide open. We must ask God for discernment as never before” – David Jeremiah

SEPTEMBER 15TH (THURSDAY)

Morning: Read Hebrews 10:19-24. Pray that our church leadership is strengthened to hold fast the confession of our hope, and may they work to stir up love and good works.

Evening: Read Ephesians 4:32. Pray that all informal and formal conversations and discussions be filled with words of grace, love, and respect.

SEPTEMBER 16TH (FRIDAY):

Morning: Read Romans 12:2. Pray that we would all be open to God’s Word shaping and changing the way we think so that we will not be conformed to this world but will be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Evening: Read Psalm 96:3. Pray for the Lord Jesus to develop a vibrant passion for sharing the Gospel within our church family so that we may boldly declare His glory.

SEPTEMBER 17TH (SATURDAY)

Morning: Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. Pray for movement away from human wisdom and toward heavenly wisdom and a deep desire to see only the will of God accomplished.

Evening: Read John 15:5. Pray that we (both individuals and the church) will fully abide in Christ.



SEPTEMBER 18TH (SUNDAY)

Morning: Read Isaiah 11:1. Pray that we abide in Christ and are rooted in Him, so we will bear His fruit.

Evening: Read Isaiah 11:2. Ask that the Spirit of the Lord rests upon the members of this church, that we may walk in the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.

SEPTEMBER 19TH (MONDAY):

Breakfast: Read Isaiah 11:3-4. Ask that we will not judge by human means, but that we will lean into the wisdom of the Lord, and we will delight in obeying the Lord.

Lunch: Read Romans 8:26-28. Pause and ask the Holy Spirit how we should be praying for our church. Pause and thank the Holy Spirit for praying for us when we don't know how to pray.

SEPTEMBER 20TH (TUESDAY):

Morning: Read Isaiah 43:18-19. Ask the Holy Spirit how our church can best be a heavenly "river in the dry wasteland" of this world.

Evening: Read 2 Corinthians 7:1. Pray this from John Wesley's Book of Common Prayer: *Almighty Father, who has given Your only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve You in pureness of living and truth, through the merits of Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*



SEPTEMBER 21ST (WEDNESDAY):

Morning: Read 1 Corinthians 6:19. Pray from John Wesley's Forms of Prayer: *I am not my own; You have bought me with a price, with the price of Your own blood. And You, therefore, died for all that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us. Arm me with this mind; circumcise my heart and make me a new creature. Let me no longer live to the desires of men but to the will of God. Amen.*

Evening: Read Ephesians 4:2-6. Pray for humility, gentleness, and patience to fill the hearts and minds of the people of our church.

REFLECTIONS:

"Faith is the divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God" – John Wesley



SEPTEMBER 22ND (THURSDAY):

Morning: Read 1 Corinthians 1:10. Pray for the people of our church to be considerate of one another with the desire to get along and serve Jesus in unity.

Evening: Read John 5:30. As a prayer, echo the words of Jesus, "I seek not my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." Let God know that you want what He wants and ask Him to reveal that to you.

SEPTEMBER 23RD (FRIDAY)

Morning: Read Proverbs 16:2. Confess to God that you realize all your ways are pure in your own eyes but that you have trouble seeing your own errors. In humility, ask Him to examine your motives.

Evening: Read Psalm 32:8. Claim God's promise to instruct us, to teach us in the way we should go, and to counsel us as He watches over us. Pray for ears to hear.

SEPTEMBER 24TH (SATURDAY)

Morning: Read Psalm 143:8. Pray that the Holy Spirit moves our hearts to fully trust God so that our ears and hearts may be open to receive His word on the way we are to walk.

Evening: Read John 14:15-31. Pray against our anxieties, fears, and prejudices, and for a release of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.



SEPTEMBER 25TH (SUNDAY)

Morning: Read Colossians 2:3. Since Christ Himself is our wisdom, pray for a deepening of union with Christ so that as our love and devotion for Him increases, our wisdom will increase.

Evening: Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-16. Pray that the people of our church have the strength and wisdom to stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teachings passed on by the apostles in Scripture.

SEPTEMBER 26TH (MONDAY)

Breakfast: Read Nehemiah 1. Allow the Holy Spirit to break your heart for the things within our church that break His. Ask for a spirit of repentance to fall on us and ask for the Lord's mercy.

Lunch: Read Ephesians 4:1. Ask the Father to plant the desire within our hearts to walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received in Christ Jesus.

SEPTEMBER 27TH (TUESDAY)

Morning: Read Matthew 25:14-30. Pray for an increase of wisdom that we be good stewards of the resources and responsibilities the Master has trusted us with. Pray for the Town Hall meeting at 10 am this evening and 7 pm tomorrow evening that the Financial Costs Team report would lead to a *"well done, my good and faithful servants."*

Evening: Read 1 Kings 3:9. Pray for an increase of wisdom so that we might discern the long-term implications and consequences of current decisions.



SEPTEMBER 28TH (WEDNESDAY)

Morning: Read John 4:23-24. Ask for the Lord's sanctifying presence every time we gather together, that we all will be the kind of worshipers the Father is seeking. Pray for the Town Hall meeting tonight at 7 pm.

Evenings: Read Romans 6:17-19. Pray that the Lord will continue His sanctifying work within our church and that we will all live as those set free from slavery to sin and instead choose to become slaves to righteous living.

REFLECTIONS:

“Our inner being is in ascendancy, far above any obstacle or disturbance. Yes it is continually free and fresh and discerns everything with the transparent sight of heaven. How radically different this life of heaven on earth is from one that is swayed by emotion.” – Watchman Nee



“The Holy Spirit will prompt us in the right direction as we learn to hear His voice and respond in obedience” – Crystal McDowell

SEPTEMBER 29TH (THURSDAY)

Morning: Read Mark 12:30-31. Ask God to call us to a deeper revelation of loving Him and loving others.

Evening: Read Isaiah 40:8. Ask God to call us to a deeper hunger for His Word so that we will put aside all the distractions of this world.

SEPTEMBER 30TH (FRIDAY)

Morning: Read John 14:15-21. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into God’s truth for penetrating revelation into the love of Christ. May we express our love as we accept Jesus’ commandments and obey them. As disciples of Christ, may we hunger for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Evening: Read Matthew 28:16-20. Pray for God to refresh our spirits with the desire to live lives that fulfill His calling on each one of us. May we believe and worship rather than doubt and hesitate.

OCTOBER 1ST (SATURDAY)

Morning: Read Philippians 4:4-9. Ask God to bring to our minds remembrance of how He has worked in our lives. So that our thoughts may be redeemed in our Father’s love, and we may walk in gratitude for his blessings.

Evening: Read Psalm 139. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s conviction; that God search our thoughts, our emotions, and our attitudes, and reveal any harmful ways within us.



OCTOBER 2ND (SUNDAY)

Morning: Read Joel 2:12-17. May we each hear the call to weep over our condition, to give the Lord our hearts, and to seek and return to Him with all that we are.

Evening: Read Psalm 5. Pray that we will have a desire to take refuge in the Lord, walk in righteousness, and seek His protection.

OCTOBER 3RD (MONDAY)

Breakfast: Read 1 Corinthians 6:19. Pray from John Wesley's Forms of Prayer: *I am not my own; You have bought me with a price, with the price of Your own blood. And You, therefore, died for all that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us. Arm me with this mind; circumcise my heart and make me a new creature. Let me no longer live to the desires of men but to the will of God. Amen.*

Lunch: Read 2 Corinthians 7:1. Pray this from John Wesley's Book of Common Prayer: *Almighty Father, who has given Your only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve You in pureness of living and truth, through the merits of Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*



OCTOBER 4TH (TUESDAY)

Morning: Read Psalm 150. Say Psalm 150 as a declaration over the people of our church family that together we will praise the Lord, and we will praise God in His sanctuary!

Evening: Read Acts 6:3. Pray that God will raise up women and men “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” to lead us in the coming days.

OCTOBER 5TH (WEDNESDAY)

Morning: Read Psalm 85:6-7. *Holy Father, will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation. Amen*

Evening: Read Ephesians 4:13-15. Pray for the transformation of the people of our church so that we will experience the fullness of what it means to know the Son of God and walk in spiritual maturity. *Grow us up in You, Lord!*

REFLECTIONS:

***“Faith is the divine evidence whereby the spiritual man/
(woman) discerns God, and the things of God.” -John Wesley***



OCTOBER 6TH (THURSDAY)

Morning: Read John 7:24. Pray that we would be able to see deeper than just the surface and understand better the judgments and ways of God.

Evening: Read Ephesians 4:29. Ask the Holy Spirit to make us sensitive and aware of the words we use and the tone of voice that accompanies those words. May we be helpful and positive in our comments and opinions so that we would encourage and build up, rather than discourage and tear down.

OCTOBER 7TH (FRIDAY)

Morning: Read Proverbs 8:8-9. Pray that we would trust God and His holy Word. Ask for the ability to simply hear and understand that which God wants to communicate.

Evening: Read Hosea 14:9. Pray that we in the church would clearly hear the voice of the Lord whispering in our spirit, directing us on His path, His ways which are true and right.

OCTOBER 8TH (SATURDAY)

Morning: Read Proverbs 3:21-24. Ask the Lord to increase our common sense and deepen our discernment. Pray that this time of Future Discernment would actually be a source of renewed refreshment for our souls and for the life of our church.

Evening: Read Psalm 119:66. If you believe in the commands of God, that they are for our good and not our harm, take some time to tell Him so. Ask God to teach you more.



“Discernment is God’s call to intercession, never to fault finding.” – Corrie Ten Boom

OCTOBER 9TH (SUNDAY)

Morning: Read Colossians 1:9. Who is God calling you to pray for? Take some time to mention their name and ask God to give them complete knowledge of His will and spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Evening: Read Romans 12:16-18. Ask the Lord to make you aware of any pride or bitterness in yourself. Repent, and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with Christ’s love and to help you to live in peace with everyone. Yes, everyone!

OCTOBER 10TH (MONDAY)

Breakfast: Read Ephesians 5:8-10. Pray that we would be so full of the Holy Spirit that we would live as people of light. Pray that we would only produce fruit that is good and right and true.

Lunch: Read Philippians 1:9-11. Pray for overflowing love. Pray for ever-increasing godly knowledge and understanding. Pray that we would live pure and blameless lives until Christ’s return. Pray that we would be filled with the fruit of our salvation, that our character would look like Jesus’ character, bringing much glory to God.

REFLECTIONS:



**OCTOBER 10TH
MARKS THE 40TH DAY OF OUR DISCERNMENT**

Our period of reflection now begins as we share what God has revealed to our church through this process. After a week of reflection, you are welcome to utilize these daily prayers below during this period of preparation for our Charge Conference.

OCTOBER 17TH (MONDAY)

Read Proverbs 3:18. Pray that we would be tree huggers, holding tightly to the wisdom of the tree of life, Jesus Christ.

OCTOBER 18TH (TUESDAY)

Read Joshua 24:15. Make declarations and proclamations about who you and your family choose to serve and who your church family will serve.

OCTOBER 19TH (WEDNESDAY)

Read James 3:17. Ask for pure wisdom from above, sincere, loving, full of mercy, gentle, and peace-loving, to be the spirit of our Church Council Meeting Tonight. Pray that the Lord would make it clear to our leaders whether or not we should call for a vote to decide our future connection with the United Methodist Church at our upcoming Charge Conference.

OCTOBER 20TH (THURSDAY)

Read Proverbs 9:10. Pray for compassion and generosity to even those with whom we disagree.



OCTOBER 21ST (FRIDAY)

Read Proverbs 3:7. Pray that we remain united in our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; that we continue to help others see God's grace crossing their lives every day.

OCTOBER 22ND (SATURDAY)

Read Proverbs 17:27. Pray that we would all embrace the words of John Wesley: *"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?"*

OCTOBER 23RD (SUNDAY)

Read Hebrews 4:12. Pray for Holy Spirit unity and mutual love to increase in our local church now and in the months to come.

OCTOBER 24TH (MONDAY)

Read Hebrews 5:14. Pray for the spiritual protection, stamina, and for health of each person in our church family.

OCTOBER 25TH (TUESDAY)

Read Romans 11:33. Pray that Christ's churches around the world are able to come together with their unique flavors to continue advancing the Gospel to every country, community, and neighborhood in the world.



OCTOBER 26TH (WEDNESDAY)

Read Job 28:28. Pray that God is glorified in and through our prayers, conferencing together, and our witness in the world. Pray for our Church Council meeting tonight at 6:30pm as they prepare for Charge Conference.

OCTOBER 27TH (THURSDAY)

Read Ephesians 4:32. Pray that all informal and formal conversations and discussions be filled with words of grace, love, and respect.

OCTOBER 28TH (FRIDAY)

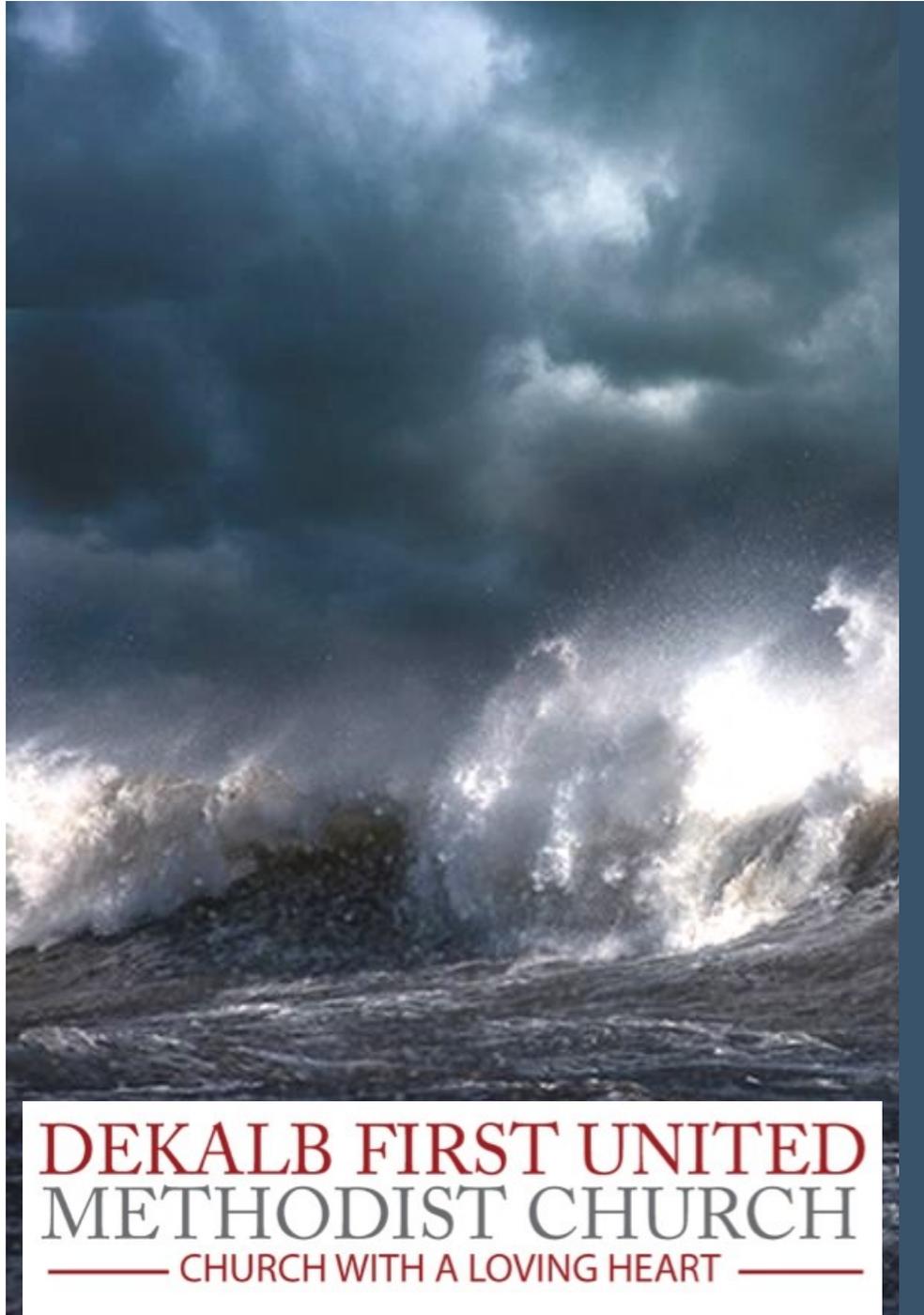
Read Matthew 6:9-13. Pray the Lord's Prayer throughout the day, focusing on the corporate needs and direction of our church. Pray, *"Not my will, but Your will be done, O Lord."*

OCTOBER 29TH (SATURDAY)

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13. Pray for our Charge Conference today at 4:00 pm. May we land right in the middle of God's will for us as a church family. May we have peace as we seek to do our duty and faithfully follow Christ together.

OCTOBER 30TH (SUNDAY)

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14. Ask the Lord to speak to the entire church body of His will and way forward. May we clearly discern His vision for our future together as the Body of Christ.



DEKALB FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
— CHURCH WITH A LOVING HEART —