

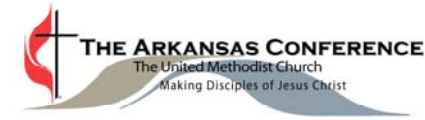
**AN APOSTOLATE OF PRAYER
“Imagine Ministry”
A Guide for Reading, Meditation, and Prayer
Week Three: August 16 – August 22, 2009**

Claim the wisdom God has promised you in James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.” Use this prayer for the next seven days.

Characteristics of Congregations Embodying the Methodist Way

A congregation that embodies the wisdom of the Methodist Way broadly in its life and ministry will be marked by at least these characteristics:

- Commitment to ongoing catechesis and formation in Christian doctrine, with emphasis on the transforming power and goal of God’s saving work in our lives and world.
- Faithful worship that draws on the rich liturgical resources of the tradition within the cultural context, inviting participants to celebrate and be shaped by the whole of the Christian story into the image of the triune God.
- Regular celebration of Holy Communion and use of other occasional ritual means of grace such as the Love Feast and the Wesleyan Covenant Service.
- “Watching over one another in love,” through small groups that nurture growth in discipleship by providing mutual support, mentoring, and accountability.
- Emphasis on cultivating intentional relationships and ministry with those whom Charles Wesley called “Jesus’ bosom friends” – the poor, the imprisoned, children, the powerless, and the vulnerable.



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- Embrace of Wesley's model of stewardship as a way of life for individuals and the congregation.
- Support for and modeling of regular Bible study, prayer, fasting, and other personal "works of piety."
- Consistent concern for inviting individuals and families into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Attention to identifying and cultivating those gifted to take roles of leadership in the range of ministry of the congregation.
- Appreciation for connection with other congregations and institutions in participating in God's mission of personal, societal and global transformation. ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Appendix to The United Methodist Way

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Which of these summary points are present in your local church already? Summarize them below and give thanks to God!

Which of the points are not present in your local church?

Which one or two is God leading you to make a matter of prayer?

Pray particularly for those who share leadership responsibilities in the local church and annual conference that will wrestle with these and other ministry concepts over the next few months.

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