

Bishop's Miracle Sunday Global Reflections

WEEK 1

Text: Ephesians 4: 11-16

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

I grew up in Switzerland, where friends and I debated self-determination versus external control. Some assumed that a practicing Christian lives under external control. That tension did not ring true. I met Christian leaders whose joyful and liberating faith reflected the essence of Christ. I chose to follow Christ, not because of pressure, but because of the power of the love of God in Christ. I chose to profess membership in a small United Methodist community because that community helped me discover Christ. Others helped me recognize gifts from God, and I sensed a quiet call to ministry. "As each part works properly, the body grows, building itself up in love" (Ephesians 4: 16). This remains my prayer for the Church.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, you love us and call us to be members of your body on earth. Through the Holy Spirit, transform our lives from the inside out so that we may build community and help transform society. Strengthen each of us to share boldly the gifts you give for the joy and courage of ministry in this world. Amen.

Contributor: Bishop Patrick Streiff

Location: Switzerland

Text: Psalm 119:1-8—A prayer of blessing for those who walk in the ways of God

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

On a recent train trip to Copenhagen, I almost set off in the wrong direction from the station. A friend corrected my course and saved a long walk with a heavy suitcase. I desire to walk in the ways of God for the sake of people and the earth, yet I often need help to discern the way. Praying Psalm 119, I choose to use ears, eyes, and mind to study the statutes of God, and I ask for guidance to use mouth, feet, and hands to practice what I learn. Formation improves spiritual direction. It works best in community, where siblings offer insight, inspiration, and correction. I give thanks for theological schools and seminaries that form Christ-centered disciples for mission wherever United Methodists serve.

Text: Ephesians 4:11-16—The body of Christ growing into maturity, shaped by Christ the head

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

My doctors tell me that the physical body shrinks with age. Scripture tells me I am not too old to help the body of Christ grow. We build up the Church together. Some share the gospel in familiar and new places. Some speak prophetically for compassion and justice. Some comfort those who mourn, others teach what discipleship means, and many serve through prayer. None can do all that is needed. Everyone can do a part. Equipped with different gifts, we learn with and from one another in homes, cafes, hospitals, classrooms, and sanctuaries. It is not always easy, yet Christ is the head. We are bound together in love, locally, regionally, and globally. Together we grow toward maturity, no matter our age.

Text: Luke 5:1-11—Jesus calls the first disciples, forming lives for mission

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

Peer and companions return from a night of empty nets. Jesus borrows their boat to teach, then calls them to try again. Abundance follows: nets strain and boats nearly sink. Peter, overwhelmed, asks Jesus to depart. Jesus stays and calls them into lifelong mission. As we approach Miracle Sunday, a large offering for theological education would be wonderful, yet Jesus seeks more than gifts. He seeks us. He calls us to follow and to serve. Are we ready to leave fear fatigue, stubbornness, or faintheartedness, and go where Christ leads?

Prayer:

Holy God, you are life, love, and hope. We praise you and seek you with our whole heart. Speak to us and lead us on your way. Christ Jesus, our brother and savior, you proclaimed good news to the poor and set the oppressed free. You called Simon Peter, James, and John, and taught that discipleship is costly. Through death you brought new life, and you walked the road of hope with many witnesses. We hear your call.

Form us in your image. Teach us to be your Church. Equip us to serve the world that God loves. Give resilience for many second miles. Above all, remind us that in you we have hope. God, through the Holy Spirit, renew us by resurrection power. Ignite us to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously wherever we are. Amen.

Contributor: Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

Location: Germany

WEEK 2

Text: Colossians 2:6-10

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

“How is your soul today?” John Wesley’s well-known question invites honest reflection. Paul writes to Colossae with courage, yet he writes from prison because of public witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ. How does Paul remain peaceful and courageous? He urges

believers to sink roots into Christ and build life upon Him. Then faith grows strong and overflows with thankfulness.

In a world that challenges faithfulness, being rooted in Christ becomes the foundation of our whole being as servants and followers. Deep connection with Christ shapes obedience and extends reach. What we receive from Christ we share for the good of the world. Paul rejects empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that lead away from Christ.

We may face personal “prisons” that limit capacity. Let us kneel before God with humble commitment and serve God’s people. May our lives, churches, and communities reflect the power, love, and call of Christ. The world needs Christ, and servants who are rooted, built up, and fruitful will carry His word. Let us continue to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously for the glory of God.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we come with humble hearts. Strengthen the roots of our salvation. Fill us with your strength and power. Give depth for ministry on a strong foundation. Create hunger and thirst for your gifts and anointing. Bless us so that we become channels of blessing for others. We claim victory in your name over challenges that hinder service. Bless our households, our schools, our workplaces, and our churches with your love and power. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Contributor: The Rev. Joseph Y. Reyes

Location: Zambales, Philippines

Text: John 10:10—Disciples Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

In 1992, the All Africa Conference of Churches gathered in Harare under the theme “Abundant Life in Jesus Christ,” based on John 10:10. The question for many Africans was and remains pressing: have we experienced abundance of life or abundance of problems? The answer is hope. The declaration of Jesus is a realized promise. Jesus speaks to us within the realities of poverty, displacement, disease, and more.

Pastors formed through funds raised on Miracle Sunday cannot relegate this declaration to the periphery. People long for abundant life given now in Christ. Jesus dismantles hindrances that keep people from grasping this abundance. The essence of Miracle Sunday is raising support for theological education in designated regions. Where does the miracle lie? It lies in how each one responds to the nudges of the Holy Spirit to give abundantly. Servants of God who benefit from this offering will proclaim the gospel that brings peace of mind and hope as the core of abundant life. As we imagine new ways of

being Church, may this Spirit-driven Miracle Sunday remind us to practice generous, sustained giving.

Prayer:

Gracious God, you have already given abundantly through Jesus Christ. Allow us to partner with you in mercy by giving wholeheartedly for the good of your ministry. Amen.

Contributor: Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa

Location: Zimbabwe

Text: John 10:10—Abundant Life Received and Shared for the Sake of the World

Meditation/Scripture Reflection

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” Jesus desires more than survival. He offers a life of meaning, purpose, joy, and spiritual fullness. Abundance is not measured by possessions or status. It is rooted in relationship with Christ, the Good Shepherd who guides, protects, and nourishes. This grace is a gift. Many seek fulfillment in achievement or pleasure and still feel empty. Jesus offers peace, hope, and identity that circumstances cannot shake. Abundant life transforms how we think, act, and relate.

This abundance is not for ourselves alone. We share it for the sake of the world. When we encounter the love of Christ, it flows outward in compassion, justice, and kindness. Sharing abundant life takes many forms: encouragement, forgiveness, practical help, and everyday acts of light. This calling carries responsibility. We use talents, time, and resources for the common good. In workplaces, families, and communities, we reflect the character of Christ and participate in God’s mission of healing and hope. Abundant life is both blessing and mission, a journey of growing in faith and extending love to others. Remaining connected to Christ, we live fully and help others experience the fullness He promises.

Prayer:

Loving and gracious Lord, you came so that we may have abundant life. Teach us that abundance lies in your presence. Guard us from distractions that do not satisfy. Open our hearts to receive your grace and to share it generously through kindness, compassion, and service. Give courage to live fully in your light, and strength to witness even in trial. May our lives testify to your goodness, so that others experience the fullness you promise. We pray with gratitude, trusting your sustaining love. Amen.

Contributor: Venelyn D. Pascua

Location: Philippines

WEEK 3

Text: John 13:34-35—Love Boldly: Loving as Christ has Loved

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

People of The United Methodist Church around the world, loving boldly as Christ has loved means putting others first. Jesus gives a new commandment: love one another as He has loved us. This love is pronounced, sacrificial, and unconditional. It does not depend on what others do for us but on what we have received from Christ. When we love in this way, we show the world what it means to follow Jesus.

Loving boldly with heart, strength, and mind means serving with gentleness, kindness, and humility. It means forgiving and doing good when it is hard. Love is not only a feeling; it is a daily choice to fulfill our Christian calling. Loving as Christ loved builds a community that reflects the Kingdom of God and reveals the heart of God to the world.

What does loving boldly look like in practice? It is loving family when love feels hard. It is serving those who cannot repay. It is choosing kindness, hospitality, and doing good over being right. Let us ask whether we are loving as Christ loves, putting others first, serving with compassion and humility, and showing the heart of God to those around us.

Prayer:

As we observe Miracle Sunday, may the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with the joy and unconditional love of Christ, so that we give joyfully, willingly, freely, and sacrificially. Amen.

Contributor: The Rev. (Dr.) Amb. Philip Micah Dopah, FIMA

Location: Nigeria

Text: Mark 12:28-34—The Heartbeat of Faithful Living

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

A scribe asks Jesus for the first commandment. Jesus distills all Scripture into a single center: love for God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and inseparable love for neighbor. The Shema defines the covenant relationship; love is total commitment, not a fleeting emotion. Jesus binds this love to Leviticus 19:18: love your neighbor as yourself. The vertical relationship with God becomes visible in horizontal relationships.

The scribe understands that this love matters more than sacrifices. Jesus tells him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Miracle Sunday invites offerings for theological education. The Church cannot love what it does not know, and it cannot serve what it does not understand. To love God with the mind means taking the formation of leaders seriously.

Theological education is a labor of love for God and neighbor. In South Africa, loving neighbor means seeing the image of God in every person and choosing solidarity, not only charity. It means asking what love requires in the face of unemployment, gender-based violence, xenophobia, and ecological harm.

Prayer:

Dear God, this passage is not a gentle suggestion but the core of our discipleship. Open our eyes to see the face of Christ in every person. Where there is inequality or exclusion, let our love dismantle injustice. Where there is hurt or division, let our love bring healing and reconciliation. Help us love in deed and in truth. Unite us in this sacred calling. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who loved us completely and teaches us the way. Amen.

Contributor: Rev. Tracy Mbalo Tshungwana

Location: South Africa

WEEK 4—NONE

WEEK 5

Text: Ephesians 6:10-18—Lead Courageously

Meditation/Scripture:

The United Methodist Church is called to lead courageously. In secular contexts where public faith can seem out of place, courageous leadership is not loud or confrontational for its own sake. It is faithful to the gospel when speaking carries a cost. It names injustice, defends the vulnerable, and acts for what is right when silence would be safer.

Our struggle is not with people. Paul reminds believers that our adversary is not flesh and blood, but the forces of this present darkness. That darkness appears in unjust laws, environmental harm, persecution, inhuman treatment of minorities, and war. The question is how to stand firm without becoming hardened. The armor of God is both spiritual and practical: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the word of God. These are not weapons of aggression but resources for resilient, hope-filled leadership.

The prophets teach that true faith loosens bonds of injustice, shares bread with the hungry, shelters the unhoused, and refuses to turn away from suffering. The Church is called not only to pray but to act. We stand, not against people, but against whatever denies the image of God in them. Across cultures, let worship fuel justice, prayer become action, and leadership reflect the liberating love of Christ.

Prayer:

God of truth and compassion, you call your people to stand firm in love when fear tempts silence. Give strength and resilience to lead courageously. Clothe us with your Spirit to speak truth where lies prevail, seek justice where dignity is denied, and bring light where darkness wounds your beloved. Give courage in word and action to defend the vulnerable, challenge harmful systems, and walk humbly with those who suffer. Make The United Methodist Church a community where prayer becomes justice, worship becomes compassion, and leadership becomes service shaped by grace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Contributor: Rev. Albert Andersen Gjøstøl, District Superintendent

Location: Norway

Text: Joshua 1:5-9

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

God speaks to Joshua, a new leader facing uncertainty. Moses is gone, the wilderness journey is ending, and the promised land lies ahead. Joshua stands at a moment of transition with great responsibility and expectation. God begins not with a strategy but with presence: "I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Courage in this passage is not self-confidence. It is God-confidence. Three times God commands Joshua to be strong and courageous. Courage is a decision rooted in trust. Joshua's strength will not come from military power or leadership skill alone, but from obedience to the word of God and reliance on the presence of God.

This speaks to the Lead Courageously—Miracle Sunday Initiative. As The United Methodist Church strengthens theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, we also stand at an edge moment, with vision and need before us. God's message remains the same: do not be afraid. The Lord our God is with us wherever we go. Courageous leadership trusts that the mission of God is larger than our resources, believes that investments in forming leaders will shape generations, and treats generosity as an act of faith. The miracle is not only in what we raise. The miracle is who we become: a people of bold faith, united purpose, and unwavering trust.

Prayer:

Gracious and ever-faithful God, you called Joshua to lead with courage. As you promised him, anchor us in that truth this week. As the Lead Courageously—Miracle Sunday Initiative grows across The United Methodist Church, pour out your Spirit on every congregation, leader, and giver. Strengthen bishops, pastors, lay leaders, and members in this season of prayer, worship, and generosity. Grant bold faith when the future feels uncertain. Give generous hearts that see theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines as shared Kingdom work. Remind us that investing in faithful leaders advances

the Great Commission. Remove fear and replace hesitation with holy confidence. Root our courage in your presence. May our actions reflect trust, our giving reflect gratitude, and our leadership reflect Christ. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Contributor: The Rev. Prosper Ntirenganya

Location: Rwanda

WEEK 6

Text: Psalm 96:1-3

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

I love many traditional hymns that shaped my faith. I also value new songs that speak to present realities. In The United Methodist Church, we now sing a new song of mission in diverse global contexts. We seek freedom for contextually adapted ministry while remaining connected worldwide. Miracle Sunday is a new song as well: never before have we invited every local church in our connection to offer a generous gift for a common cause. This song of mutual contribution can strengthen theological education for generations in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. Rooted in a Wesleyan tradition, such education prepares trusted leaders who address spiritual, social, and economic needs. They will help us declare the glory of God among the nations and the marvelous works of God among all people. \

Prayer:

God, we praise you with thousands of United Methodist congregations across the earth on this special Sunday. We want to tell of your salvation from day to day, through generations. Bless this offering so that it forms leaders in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines for many years to come. To you be all honor and praise, now and forever. Amen.

Contributor: Bishop Patrick Streiff

Location: Switzerland

Text: Psalm 96

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

Psalm 96 echoes the celebration when David brought the ark into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:23-33). The psalm proclaims that the Lord is King. In the midst of many deities, Israel confessed one true God, Creator of heaven and earth. Four essential truths emerge:

1. A call to renewed worship: the invitation to sing a new song reminds us that worship must remain living and sincere.
2. A universal proclamation: the people of God bear witness beyond church walls, beyond borders, cultures, and languages.
3. Holiness and sovereignty: reverence leads to consecration and a life that reflects the character of God.
4. Hope of righteous judgment: God will judge the earth; evil will not have the last word.

Miracle Sunday invites deeper commitment to the work of God. Through our offering, leaders will be training and the good news will continue to be proclaimed across the world. Are we ready for a. life of shared worship, mission, consecration, and hope? Amen.

Prayer:

God our Creator, Almighty God, God of glory, we proclaim your majesty. Your splendor fills the earth and brightens our lives. You are holy and worthy of all praise. May your glory be revealed among us. May your Holy Spirit guide us on this miraculous Sunday. May our offering be pleasing to you. To you be honor and glory forever. Amen.

Contributor: Pastor Pierre Bandorayingwe

Location: Congo

Text: Psalm 96

Meditation/Scripture Reflection:

Psalm 96 is a poetic, liturgical adaptation of 1 Chronicles 16:23-33. It is a vibrant call to worship that urges all creation and every nation to recognize the reign of the Lord. This is a missionary psalm: the glory of God is not confined to Israel; all the earth is invited to sing, praise, and proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

The psalm calls for a new song that crosses borders. Worship is not only personal; it is global and inclusive. The invitation extends to all people to become singers, not only hearers. Our lives should showcase the character of God by treating others with love and living with righteousness.

Psalm 96 calls the Church to worship, to mission, and to hope in God's final and just rule over all creation. Many congregations and pastors, especially in regional conferences such as the Philippines, need support for theological education. The invitation for 30,000 congregations and pastors to create a permanent endowment for theological education beyond the United States becomes a new song that unites people called United Methodists. Let us be disciples who make disciples and transform the world. Let our voices blend as one. Together, let us sing a new song.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you for calling us to be your disciples in this world of instability. Grant us grace to be true agents of transformation, lighting dark places with your love and bringing hope where there is despair. Empower us to move beyond our comfort zones, to be courageous witnesses of your truth, and to share your message of reconciliation and justice with everyone we meet. May our actions, not only our words, transform communities by breaking down walls of division and building bridges of unity, cooperation, and peace. Strengthen us to serve the vulnerable, to help those in need, to lift up the brokenhearted, and to show your compassion to all creation. Unite us in purpose and love, so that the world may know you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who calls us to change the world. Amen.

Contributor: Pastor Robert P. Baoidang, Administrative Pastor

Location: Maui United Methodist Church, Maui, Delfin Albano, Isabela, Philippines