



Prayer Journey Through the Community

This is an invitation to journey through our community in prayer and missional discernment. Whether you travel to all places at once or pass them by during the week, these places represent important parts of our community. As you pass them by, be in a spirit of prayer mindful of how people's lives are affected here and how we in our church can be in ministry here.

The local church is defined by the UMC as a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society...Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church.

The work of the church is to move out of the building into all the world. So as we journey throughout the community let us do so in a spirit of learning and discernment for how God is calling us to be in ministry to the places and people that our stops represent.

Stops:

Rising Hope

- Our partnership with Rising Hope reminds us of our biblical mandate to care for, serve, and advocate for the poor and marginalized. Jesus tells us that the way we treat the poor, the hungry, the cold, the sick, the thirst, the naked, and the imprisoned is the way we treat Christ himself. Over 3000 people experience homelessness daily in Fairfax County and more than 500,000 face homelessness in our country, not to mention those who are at risk for becoming homeless. The church can't idly stand by.

- Pray for: 1) more affordable housing; 2) for organizations helping those who are homeless; 3) for those who are homeless to have community and provision of all needs; 4) pray that we will strive to live simply simply so as to give more for those who are without
- Organizations You Can Support:
 - Make Room - help advocate for affordable housing
 - Covenant House - help provide basic needs, long-term solutions and sustainable change for youth who are homeless
 - Rising Hope - get involved locally through volunteering to be in ministry with those who are homeless

Mount Vernon Hospital

- Here we are reminded of the need for quality and affordable health care for all people. We are reminded of the many acts of healing that Jesus performed and that Jesus cares about the whole person. The United Methodist Church affirms that health care is a basic human right for all people.
- In the past few years as many as over 30 million people in the US have lacked health insurance, many of whom are low-income families. In 2015, 54% of the federal discretionary budget was spent on Defense, while only 6% was spent on health. Over 60% of bankruptcies in the US are because of illness and unpaid medical bills.
- Pray for: 1) for those who do not have health care or the full coverage they need; 2) pray for God to work through doctors and nurses to bring healing; 3) pray we can live in a world where we see health care as a human right and work to make sure all people are covered, cared for and live in wholeness
- Places to get plugged in:
 - UMCjustice.org - discover ways you can join with other United Methodists to support health care for all (look online under the health and wholeness section)
 - RIP Medical Debt - through giving you can help forgive and erase medical debt for pennies on the dollar

A Shopping Center

- Local businesses and restaurants are central places in the community for people to gather, enjoy a meal with friends, provide jobs and help people connect through common interests. It's a vital part of any community
- Pray for: 1) Building of trust and community between business, their employees and the people of the city; 2) Pray for just treatment and fair and livable wages for all employees; 3) Pray these places offer space for people to come together and share life; 4) Pray for those who work at night, clean the buildings, do the jobs most people don't want to do and who are often forgotten

- Ways to Get involved:
 - Fight for \$15 - work with others to call on job providers to provide a livable wage to all workers
 - ROC United - work for improved pay and working conditions for the 14 million people in the restaurant industry

Court House/Detention Center/Jail or Prison

“I was in prison and you visited me.” These words of Jesus show us that caring for prisoners is part of the heartbeat for the Christian church. Stopping at the courthouse and jails remind us that many people’s lives are deeply affected by what happens here.

- The US has over 2 million people in prisons. We have only 5% of the world’s population but 25% of the world’s prisoners.
- Pray for those in prison: 1) pray for healing in their lives, for fair treatment, for visits from the church, for opportunities to build a new life. 2) Pray for family members of the imprisoned. Pray for the church to surround them with care and support. 3) Pray for victims of violence and crime, that the church can live in solidarity with them. 4) Pray that we seek forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration
- Learn More:
 - UMCjustice.org - join with the UMC to learn our position and support civil rights and church strategies to care for those incarcerated and their family members
 - Check out Equal Justice Initiative to learn about mass incarceration

Along the GW Parkway

- Parks are great reminders of God’s beautiful creation. Water offers life. Trees offer breath and shade. The open grass areas offer a place for people to gather. The stars give us light. The earth is a gift from God and it sustains our lives. The earth is our home. It's important we live as faithful stewards of the environment God has given us. Yet, we know that our environment is in great need of care and restoration, so we commit ourselves to its care.
- Pray for: 1) Offer God thanks and gratitude for the many gifts of the planet and the ways it sustains our living. It is our home. 2) Offer confession and ask for forgiveness for the way we contribute to the ruin of our planet. 3) Ask God for wisdom for us and our leaders to be faithful stewards of the earth.
- Places to get plugged in:
 - Earth Justice - help support legal and advocacy work to keep our planet safe and projected.
 - Earth Day Network: The Canopy Project - for every dollar you donate you can help plant a tree to help reforest the earth

Mount Vernon High School/Belle View Elementary

- At schools we are reminded of our calling to minister to and with children, teenagers and their families in our community and world. We are reminded of the many challenges teenagers face and also the great possibilities that exist for their lives to make a difference. We are reminded of our heart and passion to care for children and youth and to journey with them. In the gospels, Jesus shares with his disciples, “let the children come to me.” Jesus shows us that the heart of God is open big and wide for children, youth and young people. The church has a calling to care for and promote the well-being of all children and youth.
- Pray for 1) youth and children who are bullied and excluded; 2) youth who are cutting, facing depression, feeling left out, contemplating suicide; 3) children and youth who live in poverty; 4) children and youth who live in abusive situations; 5) for children and teenagers to find rest, purpose and meaning in their lives through Christ. 6) For children and youth all over the world to have access to affordable and quality education
- Ways to get plugged in:
 - Malala Fund - help provide education for girls all over the world
 - Reach Out and Read - incorporating books into pediatric care
 - United We Dream - help care for the rights of immigrant youth who came to our country as children

Library & Mount Vernon Rec Center

The library reminds us of the importance of books, education and learning. Libraries make it possible for all people to have access to books and to increase in our literacy as well as providing opportunities and resources for the community to gather, to learn and to share in common interests. The Rec Center is a place that reminds us of healthy living. People come to exercise and participate in community events. Group gather here for practice and team building.

These two places function as places where people in our community come together. Let us pray: 1) for the many people who enter their doors, who are members of our community; 2) that learning and healthy living become values for all people; 3) for more access to education and literacy programs and books for all, regardless of economic status; 4) and that our church can think of what we can offer our community that meets human needs, fosters community, and serves our neighborhood.

End at MVUMC

Our church sits on a hill as a reminder that we are Christ’s light to our community. Whenever you arrive and leave our church, may you be reminded of the places you have visited and the people they represent and pray for how God can use our church to be Christ’s light for all in our community.