



Step Prayer

Several years ago, I started to explore new forms for prayer to focus and challenge my prayer writing and prayer life. I tried a number of traditional forms, but along the way, I hit upon a new form, something quite different from anything I had seen, a form I call "step prayer." A step prayer is a prayer that begins with a single word, a theme or thought and expands down seven levels by adding a word to each step ending with a seven word phrase for the last line. Each level is a phrase that reflects, echoes, relates to, or adds to the overall thought, theme or progress of the prayer. Feel free to try this. I think of the "rules" as fluid rather than fixed. Play with it creatively and see what you can create to spark your prayer life.

Some examples:

Quiet
Surrounds me
And Your Presence.
Abide with me, Lord.
Open your way before me.
May Your Spirit fill me completely;
I am an empty vessel, awaiting You.

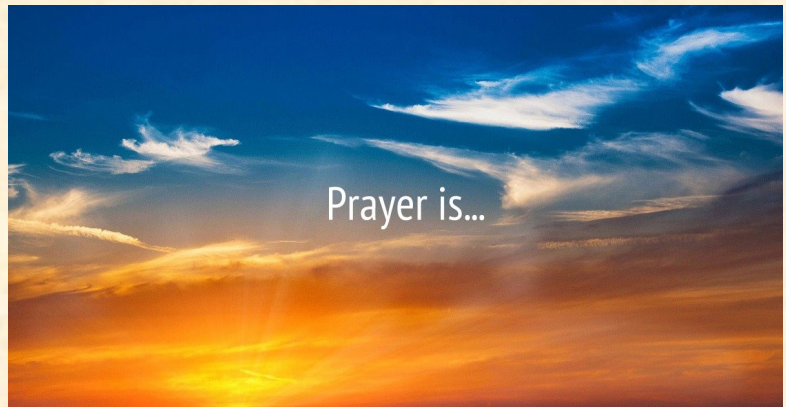
Praying
To You
Heart and soul
Opening now my life
To You who is life
Hear my prayer, grant me grace
Fill my life now in this place.

Mercy
O Lord
Is Your blessing
To those who confess.
So grant me the Grace
To live my life for You,
Guided by Your love, mercy and peace.

Blessings,

Ray

Ray W. Mendenhall



Singing Our Prayers

It was Saint Augustine who said, "The one who sings, prays twice."

Singing our prayers is an ancient practice. The psalms themselves were "sung" prayers. We have lost the music, of course, but the psalms were the hymnbook of the temple, prayers to be sung in worship. So here is a prayer you can sing. I encourage you to try it, it can bring a new dimension to prayer. The tune is the old camp/gospel song 'We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder.'

Come Now, Praise the Lord

(Tune: We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder)

*Praise the Lord now high above us.
Praise the Lord now down below us.
Praise the Lord now all around us.
Come now, Praise the Lord.*

*Praise the Lord now at our right hand.
Praise the Lord now at our left hand.
Praise the Lord before, behind us.
Come now, Praise the Lord.*

*Praise the Lord now deep within us.
Praise the Lord now far beyond us.
Praise the Lord now always with us.
Come now, Praise the Lord.*

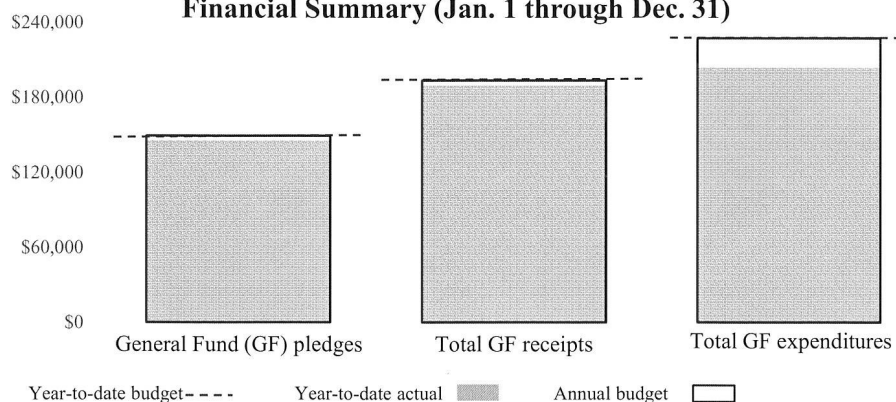
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February Birthdays

2 Joyce Abbott
3 Harriet Weaver
5 Ruth Beattie
8 Mona Azeem
12 Amelia Biliter
13 David Reynolds
14 Carrie Ackerman
23 Ann Freytag
25 Henry Biliter
26 Monika Zeps
26 Jessica Daniel



Financial Summary (Jan. 1 through Dec. 31)





Pastor Nominating Committee is Off and Running

Having quite recently received approval from all relevant parties to activate our Ministry Information Form on the Clergy Leadership Connection website, we have received our first twenty-five matches and are working our way through them. We hope to begin initial interviews in the next two weeks.

*Come,
Tell me what you see
When you look at bird or tree
In the patterns of the bees
In a passing breeze.*

*Come,
Tell me what you feel
When you watch a praying mantis kneel
When the sky turns shades of teal
When distant church bells peal.*

*Come,
Tell me what you know
When you watch the sunset's glow
When midnight stars put on a show
When fragile things grow.*

*Come,
Tell me, I really want you to,
What such moments mean to you.
Coming as they do
To gift a deeper view.*

— Ray Mendenhall



Farewell to Hyunjin Kwak

For a little over four years we've enjoyed Hyunjin's considerable gifts and skills in her work as our Director of Music Ministry while she pursued her doctorate in Choral Conducting at UK. We've always known we'd lose her eventually, but we are still sorry to see her go. She is headed to Los Angeles for a full-time conducting job at a Korean church. This came up rather quickly, and her last Sunday with us will be (or was, depending on when you receive this) January 30.

If you missed the opportunity to express your appreciation on that day, you may bring cards, gift cards, cash gifts or any other token of thanks to church **BY TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8**, and we will assemble a package to send to her in California.



109 Rosemont Garden
Lexington KY 40503
(859) 277-5126
www.hunterlex.org



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