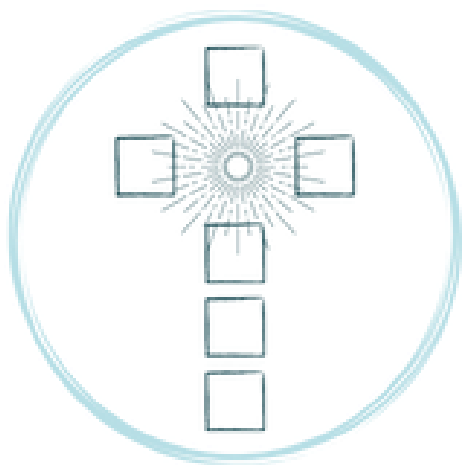


31 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR OUR NEIGHBORS



Serve & Enrich
**Zion United Church
of Christ**

**OCTOBER
2025**

“Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NRSVUE)
“When you pray, move your feet.” An African Proverb

The Spiritual Practice of Prayer

Welcome to *31 Days of Prayer for Our Neighbors*!

Prayer is a central spiritual practice of our faith. It’s how we stay spiritually connected with God and also with ourselves and our neighbors. Not only does it strengthen these important relationships, but prayer also changes us. It reminds us of our interconnection with God and neighbor. By not only talking with God but also listening to God, we discern a call to put our faith into action. Prayer can cultivate within us a more generous, courageous, and merciful spirit as we live out our faith.

We come to this particular prayer practice with compassion and empathy in our hearts, recognizing that everyone is our neighbor, the ones we are called to love and care for. As you learn and pray, open yourself to our still-speaking God and listen for ways that your prayers might move you to action.

Prayer Practice Tracker

Use the calendar below to mark off each day you engage this prayer practice.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

HUNGER

Jesus said, "...I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35 (NRSVUE)

We pray that we might feed the hungry as if we are feeding Jesus himself.

1

What is food insecurity? "Food insecurity occurs when a household cannot access enough food due to a lack of money and other essential resources. It is often linked to one or multiple factors that lead to food insecurity, creating a cycle that can be hard to break. These factors can be related to household income, expenses, access to affordable health care, the surrounding social and physical environment, and barriers to opportunity which play a role in preventing some households and communities from being food secure.

Pray: God, may we see Jesus' own face in all those facing food insecurity.

2

Indianapolis: "Up to 31% of Marion County residents needed food assistance in 2023."

Pray: For those right here in our community facing hunger, we pray.

3

Indiana: In Indiana, "1 in 5 children face hunger."

Pray: For children and those who look after them who go hungry, we pray.

4

US: In the United States, "An estimated 7.4 million seniors (60 and older) and 5.2 million older adults (50-59) experienced food insecurity in 2023."

Pray: For seniors who go hungry, we pray.

5

Around the World: "In 2023, around 2.33 billion people globally faced moderate or severe food insecurity."

Pray: God, for your children all over the world who are hungry, we pray.

6

Globally, what are the causes of hunger? "*Conflict* is the primary cause of today's hunger crisis, driving people away from their land and livelihoods, disrupting markets, increasing food prices and destroying critical developmental gains....*Climate emergencies* such as floods, droughts and heatwaves also significantly contribute by destroying lives, livelihoods and crops, while degrading soils and damaging infrastructure and agricultural assets. *Economic inequalities* exacerbate hunger. When food prices rise due to struggling economies and external factors – for example the war in Ukraine – the poorest people struggle even more to put nutritious food on the table. Additionally, around 30 per cent of global *food production is lost or wasted* every year, with lack of access to technology and markets causing significant losses for many farmers."

Pray: God, help us to not turn away from our neighbors in crisis.

7

How do we end hunger? The World Food Program and other organizations identify food waste as a major contributing factor to hunger. Organizations like the Society of St. Andrew, put into the practice the Biblical tradition of "gleaning" in order to reduce food waste. In 2024, in Indiana alone, the Society of St. Andrew gleaned and distributed 261,497 pounds of food that otherwise would have been left in fields to rot.

Pray: We pray that we might do our part to help end hunger in our own community and around the world.

HEALTH

"Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body." Proverbs 16:24 (ESV)

We pray that we might support, in word and action, all those longing for God's healing and care when it comes to their health, whether that is in body, mind, or spirit.

8

Healthcare workers: "Health care, or healthcare, is the improvement or maintenance of health...Health care is delivered by health professionals and allied health fields. Medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, midwifery, nursing, optometry, audiology, psychology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, athletic training, and other health professions all constitute health care."

Pray: We pray for healthcare workers of all kinds as they do God's healing work in this world.

9

Health and aging: "By 2035, the number of adults aged 65 and older across the United States will increase by 26%. In Indiana, the impact will be even more significant, with a projected 41% rise in Hoosiers aged 70 and over. These changes call for coordinated action to ensure that older adults can age with security and opportunity."

Pray: We pray for health as we age.

10

The cost of health: "Hoosiers carry a significant burden: An estimated \$2.2 billion of medical debt in collections. Medical debt keeps many from economic stability, and this burden is felt even more deeply by Hoosiers living in or near poverty."

Pray: We pray for all those feeling the economic burden of healthcare.

11

Mental Health: "Data finds roughly one-third of women in central Indiana reported having depression - more than double the rate of men. Allissa Impink is the Director of Advocacy for the Women's Fund of Central Indiana. 'Women often carry the majority of caregiving responsibilities, whether that's caring for children, whether it's caring for aging parents or a family member in crisis,' she said. 'Root causes like affordable housing, reliable transportation, access to childcare,' she said. 'All of that financial instability directly impacts whether a woman can even make an appointment to prioritize her own well being.'"

Pray: We pray all those facing challenges with their mental health.

12

Healthcare around the world: "Healthcare, a fundamental human right, remains an elusive privilege in many third-world countries. One of the primary challenges in third-world countries is the lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure. Insufficient hospitals, clinics, and trained medical professionals create a critical gap in service provision. Many remote areas lack even the most basic healthcare facilities, leaving populations without access to essential medical care. This scarcity perpetuates a cycle of illness, with preventable diseases taking a toll on communities."

Pray: We pray for our neighbors around the globe who lack access to the most basic healthcare.

13

Health and behaviors: “2 million (1%) of U.S. adults are estimated to meet criteria for pathological gambling in a given year. Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered problem gamblers; that is, they do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling, but meet one or more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior. Research also indicates that most adults who choose to gamble are able to do so responsibly. Gambling is present in every community in Indiana. Gambling is not just going to a casino and pulling the lever on a slot machine. You can gamble almost anywhere. About 85% of the adult US population has engaged in some form of gambling at least once in their life, with 60% of the population gambling in the last year.”

Pray: We pray for those struggling with behaviors that are harmful for their health.

14

A critical health concern for our Hoosier neighbors: “Diabetes affects a substantial portion of the population in Indiana, with nearly 90% of diagnosed cases being Type 2 diabetes. This type usually begins as insulin resistance, where the body's cells do not use insulin properly. Type 1 diabetes, which accounts for about 5-10% of cases, occurs when the immune system destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. Diabetes remains a critical public health issue in Indiana... Whether through education, research, or clinical care, there are numerous avenues for support available to those affected by diabetes in Indiana.”

Pray: We pray for support for our neighbors experiencing diabetes and other chronic diseases.

HOUSING

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2 (NIV)

We pray that we might help create a world where all have a home.

15

Waiting: “The Indianapolis Housing Agency IHA offers low rent public housing to eligible low income families, seniors, and person with disabilities throughout Indianapolis. The Insight Development Corporation partners with state and local government, communities and private partners to address the housing needs of Indianapolis community. Unfortunately, the waitlist can be from six months to four years depending on monies available from HUD.”

Pray: God, offer encouragement to those who wait, sometimes for years, for a home.

16

Aging in Place: “Most of us want to stay in our homes as long as possible. This is called Aging in Place. All it takes is one bout of bad luck, such as a medical emergency, to land you in a financial crisis. This especially rings true for older adults living on fixed incomes or working hourly-wage jobs. Some worry about their finances in terms of weeks—some only days, much less months that are potentially needed for full economic recovery.”

Pray: For those facing uncertainty in housing, we pray.

17

Hope: “In July 2025, 1,815 people in Marion County lacked housing, the highest number since 2021. In June 2025 Indianapolis unveiled “Streets to Home Indie” initiative to tackle chronic homelessness. The plan focuses on a multi-phase initiative aiming to move thousands of people off the streets and into housing by 2028.”

Pray: For all those working on initiatives to end homelessness, we pray.

18

Mental Health and Housing: “The Indiana PATH program is supported by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s PATH grant. The PATH program provides states and territories with funds for flexible community-based services for persons with serious mental illnesses who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. PATH program providers are located throughout the state and are typically Community Mental Health Centers.”

Pray: God, may all those facing mental illness find the support and care they need.

19

Domestic Violence and Housing: “There are currently 7 domestic violence and abuse shelters/programs in Indianapolis with 4 offering hotline and 4 offering emergency shelter. The Julian Center is the largest domestic violence shelter in Indiana, providing 1,795 survivors with services last year alone. The mission is to help victims become survivors through services, education and partnerships that foster hope, self sufficiency and rebuild lives.”

Pray: For all those who experience violence and for whom home is not safe, we pray.

20

Global Housing: “Housing crisis around the world: The UN’s urban development agency estimates that an astonishing 2.8 billion people worldwide lack access to adequate housing, secure land, and basic water and sanitation services – that’s around 40 per cent of the global population. This includes more than 1.12 billion people living in slums or informal settlements. An additional 300 million face absolute homelessness, lacking any form of stable shelter, UN-Habitat estimates.”

Pray: God, be with our neighbors around the world who longing for shelter.

21

Housing and Urbanization: “The housing crisis is particularly acute in rapidly urbanising regions such as Africa and the Asia-Pacific. As cities grow, housing development and infrastructure fail to keep pace, leading to a dramatic increase in informal and inadequate living conditions. In Africa, 62 per cent of urban dwellings are informal. In the Asia-Pacific region, over 500 million people lack access to basic water services, and more than a billion live without adequate sanitation. As climate change intensifies, those without formal, quality housing and services face growing risks from extreme heat, severe weather events, and water scarcity.”

Pray: For those who have housing that does not support safe living conditions, especially as our climate crisis grows, we pray.

HUMANITARIAN

God, make us instruments of your peace.

“God has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8 (NRSVUE)

22

Poverty in the US: “In 2023, the official poverty rate fell 0.4 percentage points to 11.1 percent. There were 36.8 million people in poverty in 2023.”

Pray: We give thanks for progress but pray we might ensure all have enough to live well.

23

The impact of a warming world: “Research shows that 3.6 billion people already live in areas highly susceptible to climate change. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress alone.”

Pray: May we love our neighbors by loving the planet that nurtures their life.

24

Education: “Around the world, 119 million girls are out of school, including 34 million of primary school age, 28 million of lower-secondary school age, and 58 million of upper-secondary school age. In countries affected by conflict, girls are more than twice as likely to be out of school than girls living in non-affected countries...The reasons are many. Barriers to girls’ education – like poverty, child marriage and gender-based violence – vary among countries and communities. Poor families often favour boys when investing in education.”

Pray: That all children might have the opportunity to learn and grow, we pray.

25

Water: “Between 2015 and 2024, 961 million people gained access to safely managed drinking water services, raising global coverage from 68% to 74%. However, 2.1 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water, 1.5 billion had basic services, 287 million had limited services, 302 million relied on unimproved sources, and 106 million collected water directly from surface water sources such as rivers and lakes.”

Pray: We pray that all who thirst might have safe water to drink.

26

Natural Disasters in the US: “In 2024, there were 27 individual weather and climate disasters with at least \$1 billion in damages, trailing only the record-setting 28 events analyzed in 2023. These disasters caused at least 568 direct or indirect fatalities, which is the eighth-highest for these billion-dollar disasters over the last 45 years (1980-2024). The cost was approximately \$182.7 billion. This total places 2024 as the fourth-costliest on record, trailing 2017 (\$395.9 billion), 2005 (\$268.5 billion) and 2022 (\$183.6 billion).”

Pray: When disaster strikes, surround and protect your people, through the storm and beyond.

27

Slavery is with us today: “Modern slavery is all around us, often hidden in plain sight. People can become enslaved making our clothes, serving our food, picking our crops, working in factories, or working in houses as cooks, cleaners or nannies. Victims of modern slavery might face violence or threats, be forced into inescapable debt, or have their passport taken away and face being threatened with deportation. Many people have fallen into this trap because they were trying to escape poverty or insecurity, improve their lives and support their families. Now, they can’t leave...49.6 million people live in modern slavery.”

Pray: Like Moses, may our cry be, “Let my people go.”

28

Displaced: “At the end of 2024, an estimated 123.2 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing the public order.”

Pray: For all those who have had to flee for their homes for their safety, we pray.

Volunteerism in America: “Over 75.7 million or 28.3% of the U.S. population age 16 and up formally volunteered through an organization between September 2022 and September 2023, approaching a return to pre-pandemic levels of volunteerism, according to joint research by the U.S. Census Bureau and AmeriCorps. National rates of several other types of civic engagement similarly bounced back during that period, even surpassing pre-pandemic rates in some cases — a sign of renewed involvement in many aspects of civic life. An estimated 54.2% of Americans helped or exchanged favors with neighbors such as house sitting, running errands, or lending tools between September 2022 and 2023 compared to 51.7% in 2019.”

Pray: For all those who love and serve their neighbors, we give thanks.

Our church at work: “Global Ministries works with approximately 250 partners in close to 90 countries. We join hands with international partners and walk together in mutual love and respect with our siblings around the world. With partner churches, nonprofit organizations, and ecumenical bodies throughout the world, we share life, resources, support, and faith. This often includes advocacy work, opportunities for mutual exchange and learning, sharing of mission personnel, sharing of financial and material resources, and being in prayer for and with international partners. Join us in realizing our vision that all of God’s people and creation share in God’s abundant life.”

Pray: For our church and partners around the world share Christ’s light and love through humanitarian work, we give thanks.

Loving our neighbors: In 2025, Zion United Church of Christ collected crayons and Hot Wheels for children facing health concerns at Riley Hospital for Children, put together snack packs for Horizon House to support their neighbors experiencing homelessness, collected diapers to share with their neighbors caring for young children, paid an electric bill for a neighbor facing disconnection, purchased gas cards for neighbors in need of transportation, supported a couple fostering a child by delivering critical supplies to them, provided safe space for people of all ages to be enriched in body and spirit, collected poptabs for the Ronald McDonald House, donated blood and opened their doors so others could, too, created community to nurture spiritual and social well-being, offered grief support, fed hungry neighbors through food pantry contributions, donated generously to partners engaging in humanitarian work near and far, and loved their neighbors in countless other ways.

Pray: God, continue to inspire and enable us to serve and love our neighbors.

Reflect: What was one of the most striking things you learned during this practice?

Reflect: In what ways did this daily prayer practice draw you closer to God?

Reflect: In what ways did this daily prayer practice draw you closer to your neighbors?

Reflect: What will you do next to live your love for your neighbors?

RESOURCES

1. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/indiana/county/marion>
2. <https://www.indyhunger.org/hunger-studies/>
3. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/indiana#:~:text=In%20Indiana%2C%201%2C033%2C890%20people%20are,of%20them%20292%2C720%20are%20children.&text=face%20hunger.,to%20meet%20their%20food%20needs>
4. <https://www.gleaners.org/feeding-america-map-the-meal-gap-2025-2023-data/>
5. <https://www.who.int/news/item/24-07-2024-hunger-numbers-stubbornly-high-for-three-consecutive-years-as-global-crises-deepen--un-report>
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12. Ek Plate Biryani is a nonprofit organization, registered in Canada.
13. Indianaproblemgambling.org
14. <https://www.in.gov/health/cdpc/diabetes/>
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30. <https://www.globalministries.org/about-2/>
31. Zion United Church of Christ, 8916 E. Troy Ave., Indianapolis, IN