

Counselor's Corner: *Using Prayer in Pastoral Counseling* by Rev. Stephen Lander, LMFT, MA.LP, Westminster Counseling Center

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One of the things I appreciate the most about working in the Westminster Counseling Center is the ability to integrate the secular tools of psychology with spiritual practices of our Christian traditions. And one of the ways that this process of integration happens most clearly is in the discussion about, and use of, prayer, as part of pastoral counseling.

The theologian Karl Barth said that, "The first and basic act of theological work is prayer." What we pray for fundamentally shapes and expresses our relationship with God, and I believe that this is why we often place so much emphasis on our prayer life during Lent.

Our spiritual and psychological journeys are strengthened by the practice of a regular commitment to reflection and prayer. The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, for example, ask that participants seek, "through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Probably the most significant thing any of us can do on our journey of faith and psychological transformation is the development of our commitment to prayer. The writer Walter Wink says that, "History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being."

One of my favorite prayers comes from the Compline service of the Anglican Diocese of New Zealand. It is a prayer that is especially meaningful when I am going through times of dramatic change and transition, times in which anxiety and worry can seem to overwhelm daily life, or times, like Lent, when I am being more intentionally introspective.

Lord,
It is night.

The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of
God.

It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been
done;
What has not been done has not been done;
Let it be.

The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world
and of our own lives
Rest in you.

The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
All dear to us.
And all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
New joys,
New possibilities.

In your name we pray.
Amen.

New Zealand Prayer Book (pg 184)



Stephen Lander

Don't Forget! Winter Fun Day at Camp Ajawah, February 16

By Doug Stearley, Children, Youth & Families Council

Westminster Outdoors is sponsoring a Winter Fun Day at Camp Ajawah on Saturday, February 16, from 10:00AM—5:00PM. This will be a great opportunity for individuals and families with children of all ages, to enjoy a variety of winter sports and activities at our beautiful north woods camp.

Start the day by ice skating, cross country skiing, sledging, hiking, or ice fishing. Please bring your own equipment and a sack lunch. Hot cocoa and cider will be provided. The afternoon will be filled with group games and contests like broomball, snow golf, snowman and igloo building, scavenger hunt, and maybe even a snowball

fight! The cost is only \$5 per adult.

Please contact Doug Stearley at dougstearley@msn.com or Doug Van Valkenburg at vanv0034@umn.edu to register for this event. Directions and a map to the camp can be found at www.ajawah.org. Volunteers are needed to help organize and lead group games and contests.

