

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I PUT MY NAME ON THE PRAYER CHAIN?

As new pastor I've been impressed by the care shown through the various prayer ministries of our congregation: Prayer Chain; Prayer Board, and Prayers lifted in worship. These venues not only help direct our prayer lives, but they also serve as valuable tools for keeping up with, and caring for, one another.

One of the questions frequently heard is, "How do I ask for a loved one's (or my own) name to be listed, and then what happens after it is listed and mentioned in these sources?" Here's a brief explanation:

Prayer Chain: Upon request, pastors or office staff write a short synopsis of the prayer request and email it out to those who have requested Prayer Chain information. The request is also relayed the "old-fashioned" way, via phone communication (phone tree).

Joys and Concerns shared in worship: As you know, we have changed the way in which prayers are shared in our Sunday morning worship. Our goal is to focus ourselves and our prayer time on sharing with God. These prayers generally stay in worship and are not relayed further, unless requested.

Prayer Board: The Church Office is a common space for the entire congregation and others who are a part of the extended church community (Community Child Care, Nursery school, etc.) to do business, meet, and share with one another. The Prayer Board offers a space where, via church staff and pastors, prayer requests can be posted. One of the beautiful things about the Prayer Board is the frequency with which people check it, even when the church office is closed. Many a time, I have seen people peeking in the office window to see who they might hold in prayer.

You may always call a pastor or the church office and request to have your name placed on the Prayer Chain, Prayer Board or have a prayer request mentioned in Sunday worship.

Some tips for sharing:

Be sensitive to privacy. Because these are all public places (Prayer Chain emails could be forwarded, Prayer Board and Worship are open to the public) I ask that we all be sensitive to the privacy of those for whom we wish to pray. Remember, when we are sick, we are vulnerable too. Some people wish for things to be said a certain way, or do not wish to be listed in one place, but are okay with another place. Always ask the person to be prayed for before requesting they be raised in prayer.

Be specific. Specificity helps us pray for one another, and it also allows for us to tell one another how we can best be served in our time of need. Common requests include, "cards appreciated," "no visits now please," etc.

Consider listing yourself. Many of us have reservations about being listed. I invite you to consider how you miss others when they are gone—now consider how your presence is missed when you are gone! In a community of mutual care, we must be willing to be cared for, as well as care for others.

Don't forget the joys! We often think about contacting the church only when things are not going well. Celebrations for bodies healed and obstacles overcome are also quite welcome.

In Peace and Joy, Pastor Greg