5. Forward Lunge (other side) - Renewed Resolve
Step forward with opposite leg.
Receive renewed strength to continue the journey.
(Seated: step the opposite foot forward)
Breath Prayer

6. Offering Reach - Interceding for the World
Extend your arms forward.
Hold the needs/pain of the world before God.
Release into God's care with prayer.
(Seated: extend arms forward from heart)
Breath Prayer

7. Arms Raised - Praise and Trust
Lift your arms upward in praise.
Acknowledge God's presence and faithfulness.
Let gratitude rise, even in uncertainty.
(Seated: lift arms, open palms upward)
Breath Prayer

8. Standing at Rest - Entrusting What Remains
Return to relaxed posture.
Arms rest naturally. Knees soft.
Practice resting in God's care.
(Seated: let hands rest softly in lap)
Breath Prayer

Remain still for a few breaths.
Carry this steadiness and God's presence with you into the day.
Amen.

Be Strong and Courageous in Prayer

4 Weeks of Prayer & Spiritual Growth

Week 3

Corona United Methodist Church
May 2026
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Adapted from
South Bay Community Church - Freemont

Dear Corona United Methodist Church Family,

Over these past weeks, we've listened and prayed. Many of us have sought to be strong and courageous by trusting God with steps of faith. But have you noticed that sometimes after we take that step, things feel harder?

If that's been your experience, you're not alone.

Scripture never promises that faithfulness removes difficulty. What it promises is that God goes with us. Week 3 invites us to practice being strong and courageous when the path gets hard- not by striving or forcing outcomes, but by learning to persevere with trust.

This week's prayers acknowledge that some challenges are external, some are internal and some are harder to name. Our hope is to cultivate awareness and attentiveness that helps us recognize where God is already present and at work. Courage, here, looks like steadiness and faithfulness; the willingness to remain rooted even when the journey feels longer than expected.

As you move through this week, my prayer is that you would discover a deeper confidence. Not that everything will be resolved quickly, but that God is faithful, and you are not walking alone.

Peace and blessings on your journey,
Pastor Susan

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

"Praying When It's Hard"

You may do these moves standing or sitting. Move slowly. Skip any posture that does not feel accessible.

1. Grounded Standing - Becoming Present
Stand (or sit) with feet rooted into the ground.
Lengthen your spine. Soften your shoulders.
Notice where your body feels steady.
Breath Prayer

2. Forward Lunge - Taking a Faithful Step
Step one foot forward into a gentle lunge.
Feel strength in your legs.
Acknowledge the step you have taken in faith.
(Seated: shift your weight forward)
Breath Prayer

3. Warrior Stance - Discernment & Focus
Extend your arms wide, grounded and strong.
Hold your gaze steady.
Invite clarity and wisdom; remain alert & present.
(Seated: extend your arms outward)
Breath Prayer

4. Heart Opening - Trusting God's Way
Lift your chest gently, allowing heart to open
Let arms drift slightly back, palms open.
Embrace vulnerability and trust.
(Seated: lift your chest slightly, arms back)
Breath Prayer

DAY 6 — Integrating the Week

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)

"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid…" — Joshua 1:9

Reflection

Today is a day to look back - not to measure success, but to notice what prayer revealed. Slowing down often brings patterns into view: resistance, distraction and deeper awareness.

- What themes or practices stayed with you?
- Where did prayer feel most honest or life-giving?

You may choose to move through the Embodied Prayer Flow, or rest in one posture that feels especially grounding.

DAY 7 — Sabbath Rest

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." — Isaiah 30:15

Reflection

Today there is nothing to accomplish and nothing to prove. Rest. Worship. Receive God' s presence with gratitude.

- Where do I notice a deeper sense of trust?
- What am I releasing into God's care?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today? What do I want to say to God in return?

Week 3

Praying When It's Hard

Be Strong and Courageous in Prayer

This week invites us to practice courage as steady trust -
learning to remain faithful and grounded
when the path feels difficult,
trusting that god goes with us and stays with us.

DAY 1 — When the Path Gets Hard

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you."
- Deuteronomy 31:6

Reflection
Often, we expect courage to be required *before* we take a step of faith. Yet many discover that the greater challenge comes after we've said yes.

After obedience, doubt may surface. After commitment, weariness can set in. After stepping forward, the path may feel heavier than expected.

This does not mean we misheard God. It means we are learning what perseverance requires. Scripture reminds us that faithfulness does not remove difficulty - it deepens dependence. Courage, in God's economy, is not force or intensity, but steady trust.

- *Since taking a step of faith, what has felt harder than expected?*
- *Where are you being invited to practice steady trust today?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: God, You go before me
Exhale: I will stand firm in You

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Praying When It's Hard"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

Reflect back over your day, consider:

- When did I sense renewed resolve?
- What helped me keep going?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Rest in God's presence.

DAY 5 — Stepping Forward with Renewed Resolve

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."
Hebrews 12:1

Reflection
After discernment and surrender, there often comes a moment to move forward again - not with force, but with renewed resolve. Perseverance is not about pushing harder; it is about continuing faithfully, strengthened by trust rather than fear.

Even small steps matter when they are taken with faithfulness.

- *Where am I being invited to continue rather than quit?*
- *What does a faithful next step look like today?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: God, renew my strength
Exhale: I will keep going

Closing Invitation
Take one faithful step today, trusting God with the outcome.

Closing Invitation
Practice courage today through steadiness rather than striving.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Praying When It's Hard"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Let the movements become prayer - without rushing, without striving. Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

Reflect back over your day, consider:

- When did I notice resistance or weariness?
- Where was I invited to remain steady rather than give up?
- What do I sense God saying to me?
- What do I want to say to God in response?

Rest in God's presence.

DAY 2 — Discernment in Challenge

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and God will give it to you." - James 1:5

Reflection
When challenges arise, our instinct is often to respond quickly - to fix, avoid, or push through. But not every challenge means the same thing. Some resistance comes from fear. Some from fatigue. Some from distraction or temptation. Discernment helps us respond wisely rather than react emotionally.

Prayer invites us to slow down long enough to notice what is actually happening within us and around us. Instead of asking, "How do I make this go away" we learn to ask, "God, what do you want me to see?" Wisdom grows not through urgency, but through attention.

- *What kinds of challenges am I facing right now?*
- *What might God be inviting me to notice more clearly?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: God, give me wisdom
Exhale: Help me see clearly

Closing Invitation
Move through today at a pace that allows wisdom to surface..

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Praying When It's Hard"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Let your movements express your intention to belong fully to God. Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

Reflect back over your day, consider:

- Where did I feel pressure to control outcomes?
- Where did I choose trust instead?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to release or entrust to God?

Offer these moments to God.

DAY 4 — Standing Firm Like Jesus

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"The Scriptures say, "You must not test the Lord your God."
Matthew 4:7

Reflection
When Jesus faced temptation in the wilderness, he did not respond with fear, force, or shortcuts. He remained rotted in God's truth and trusted God's way, even when the path was difficult. His strength was not loud or dramatic - it was faithful.

Standing firm often looks quieter that we expect. It means resisting the urge to grasp control or rush resolution, choosing faithfulness instead.

- *Where am I tempted to rush, control or take shortcuts?*
- *What would faithfulness look like here?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: God, I trust Your way
Exhale: Help me remain faithful

Closing Invitation
Let faithfulness - not urgency - shape your choices today.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Praying When It's Hard"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Allow your body to remind you that God goes before you.
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

Reflect back over your day, consider:

- When did I feel rushed or reactive?
- Where did I experience clarity, even briefly?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Entrust these reflections to God.

DAY 3 — The Interior Battle

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"Search me, O God, and know my heart."
- Psalm 139:23

Reflection
Some of the most challenging battles we face are not external - they are internal. Discouragement, fear, self-doubt and weariness can quietly shape our decisions if left unnamed. These struggles often surface when we are tired, stretched, or trying to persevere.

God welcomes honesty. Naming what we carry is not weakness; it is courage. When we bring our interior struggles into God's presence, we make room for grace instead of striving alone.

- *What inner struggle have I been carrying quietly?*
- *What might it mean to bring this honestly before God*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: God, You know my heart
Exhale: I bring myself to You

Closing Invitation
Practice courage today by telling the truth - first to God.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Praying When It's Hard"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

Reflect back over your day, consider:

- When did I notice inner resistance or distance from God?
- How did I respond - with avoidance or openness?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Rest in God's timing.