

Atonement Lutheran Church



Prayer & Discernment Guide

*A seven-day journey
of Scripture, reflection, and prayer*

Why this guide?

Thank you for participating in a Prepare for the Bite. Atonement believes generosity is a spiritual practice, not just a financial decision. Before we decide how to respond, we want to slow down, listen for God's voice, and seek the Spirit's wisdom.

This guide is designed to help you discern how God is calling you to participate in Atonement's *Prepare for the Bite* capital campaign. If you are married, we encourage you to walk through it with your spouse (if applicable).

Prepare for the Bite in one sentence

Prepare for the Bite is Atonement Lutheran Church's three-year, over-and-above capital campaign to **raise \$2,000,000** for deferred maintenance, campus sustainment, and mission impact.

How to use this guide

- Set aside 10–15 minutes each day for the next 7 days.
- Begin with the short "Settle In" prompt and ask God to speak through Scripture.
- Journal honestly. There are no "right" answers—only truthful ones.
- If you are married, share what you are hearing with your spouse.
- End each day with the prayer and the simple daily question below.

A simple daily question

"God, what do you want to do through me?"

As you pray, listen for what rises to the surface: gratitude, resistance, curiosity, peace, conviction, or questions. Bring whatever you hear to God with honesty.

A gentle reminder

God's love is not for sale. We do not give to earn God's favor. We give because we are already loved in Christ. Our giving becomes one way we participate in God's work and leave a spiritual legacy for the next generation.

Before you begin

Choose a consistent time and place. Put your phone on silent.

Take a breath. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and freedom.

Day 1 — Prayer: Listening for God's invitation

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: "Speak, Lord. I am listening."

Scripture

Read: Psalm 32:8; James 1:5

God promises to guide us and invites us to ask for wisdom with confidence.

Reflect

Discernment begins with listening. Before we think about numbers, budgets, or timing, we begin with relationship—God's loving attention toward us.

As you pray about Prepare for the Bite, remember: you are not trying to persuade God. You are opening yourself to what God may already be stirring in you.

Questions for Reflection

- What do I need wisdom for right now—beyond this campaign?
- What emotions do I notice as I think about making an over-and-above commitment (peace, fear, hope, resistance, gratitude)?
- What would it look like for me to be fully honest with God this week?

Journal

Action Step

Pray this simple prayer three times today: "God, what do you want to do through me?" Write down what you notice.

Prayer

*Holy Spirit, quiet the noise in me. Give me wisdom that is gentle and true.
Help me listen with trust. Amen.*

Day 2 — Abundance: Remembering God’s provision

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: “Speak, Lord. I am listening.”

Scripture

Read: Psalm 65:9–13; 2 Corinthians 9:8

Scripture reminds us that God provides—often more abundantly and creatively than we expect.

Reflect

Our world trains us to think in scarcity: “What if there isn’t enough?” But Scripture forms us in a different story: God provides daily bread, strength for today, and hope for tomorrow.

Abundance does not mean we never feel limits. It means our limits do not have the final word. God’s grace and provision are deeper than our fear.

Questions for Reflection

- Where have I seen God provide in my life over the last year?
- Where have I seen God provide for Atonement’s ministry and people?
- What would it mean for me to make this decision from trust rather than fear?

Journal

Action Step

Make a list of 10 specific ways God has provided for you (relationships, opportunities, protection, resources, guidance, healing). Thank God for each one.

Prayer

*God of abundance, thank you for providing what I need.
Free me from fear and teach me to trust your care. Amen.*

Day 3 — Gratitude: Naming the gifts we've received

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: "Speak, Lord. I am listening."

Scripture

Read: Psalm 136:1; 1 Chronicles 29:10–14

Gratitude anchors us in God's goodness and reminds us that everything we have is received before it is given.

Reflect

Gratitude is more than a feeling; it is a practice that shapes our hearts. It pushes back against entitlement ("I deserve this") and envy ("I need what they have").

When we name the gifts we've received, we become freer to give with joy.

Questions for Reflection

- What people, ministries, or moments at Atonement have been gifts from God to me?
- When I picture the next generation at Atonement, what do I hope they receive?
- What might God be inviting me to give as an act of gratitude?

Journal

Action Step

Send a brief note (text, email, or handwritten) to someone who has helped you grow in faith (a friend, teacher, leader, pastor). Keep it simple: "Thank you for..."

Prayer

*Jesus, thank you for the gifts you've placed in my life.
Let gratitude—not guilt—shape my generosity. Amen.*

Day 4 — Faith: Putting down the nets

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: “Speak, Lord. I am listening.”

Scripture

Read: Luke 5:1–11

In Luke 5, Jesus meets tired fishermen with an invitation: trust me again—and get ready for what I will do.

Reflect

Prepare for the Bite takes its name from Luke 5—when empty nets become overflowing nets at Jesus’ word.

Notice that Jesus doesn’t shame Simon Peter for the empty night. He simply invites him to try again, this time with Jesus in the boat.

Faith is not certainty; it is trust. Sometimes faith looks like a next step taken with open hands.

Questions for Reflection

- Where do I feel “tired” or “empty-net” in life right now?
- What might it look like for me to trust Jesus in a fresh way?
- If Jesus were to say, “Try again,” what would I be most afraid of? What would I hope for?

Journal

Action Step

Read Luke 5:1–11 slowly (out loud if you can). As you read, pay attention to one word or phrase that stands out. Journal about why it caught your attention.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you meet me in my ordinary life. Give me the courage to trust you, even when I don't have guarantees. Amen.

Day 5 — Restoration: Becoming more like Christ

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: “Speak, Lord. I am listening.”

Scripture

Read: Ephesians 2:8–10; Matthew 6:9–10

God’s grace restores us. We are formed for good works, and we pray for God’s will to be done in us and through us.

Reflect

At the center of the gospel is grace: God’s undeserved love and mercy. As we receive grace, we are gradually restored—shaped into people who love, serve, and give more freely.

Generosity is not about earning salvation. It is about becoming who we are in Christ.

As Atonement strengthens its campus for ministry, it is ultimately about people—worship, children, neighbors, and future disciples.

Questions for Reflection

- Where do I sense God restoring me right now?
- How might God want to restore or strengthen Atonement through this campaign?
- What is one area where I feel invited to grow (trust, sacrifice, joy, courage, simplicity)?

Journal

Action Step

Pray the Lord’s Prayer slowly. When you reach “Your kingdom come; your will be done,” pause and name one specific area of your life and one area of Atonement’s life you want to place in God’s hands.

Prayer

*Father, thank you for saving me by grace. Restore what is weary in me.
Shape me into a person who reflects your love. Amen.*

Day 6 — Stewardship: Faithful with what we've been given

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: "Speak, Lord. I am listening."

Scripture

Read: Matthew 25:14–23; 1 Peter 4:10

Stewardship is the practice of receiving God's gifts and using them faithfully for God's purposes.

Reflect

Stewardship is not only about money. It includes time, attention, relationships, skills, influence, and resources.

Jesus' parable of the talents underscores an important point: faithfulness matters. God delights in wise stewardship—not perfection, not comparison, and not fear-driven hiding.

As you consider a campaign commitment, the question is not "What can others do?" but "What is faithful for me?"

Questions for Reflection

- What gifts (resources, skills, relationships) has God entrusted to me?
- What would "faithful stewardship" look like in this season of my life?
- What boundaries do I need so that an over-and-above gift is wise and sustainable?

Journal

Action Step

Take 10 minutes to review your life with God. Where are you spending your resources (time, money, attention)? Is there one adjustment God might be inviting you to make so your life aligns more closely with your values?

Prayer

God, everything I have is yours. Teach me to steward it with joy, wisdom, and love.

Help me be faithful. Amen.

Day 7 — Generosity: Blessed to be a blessing

Settle In

Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release whatever is weighing on you. Pray: “Speak, Lord. I am listening.”

Scripture

Read: Genesis 12:1–3; Proverbs 11:24–25; Acts 20:35

In Scripture, blessing is never meant to stop with us. God blesses people so they can become a blessing to others.

Reflect

Atonement’s mission is rooted in leaving a spiritual legacy. When we give, we participate in something that outlasts us: worship that shapes hearts, spaces that welcome people, and ministry that reaches neighbors.

Generosity is not measured by equal amounts but by equal sacrifice and equal faithfulness.

As you prepare for your conversation with Pastor Zac, ask God for clarity and peace—whatever your next faithful step may be.

Questions for Reflection

- What do I sense God inviting me to do as part of Prepare for the Bite?
- What would it look like for me to give with joy and freedom (not pressure)?

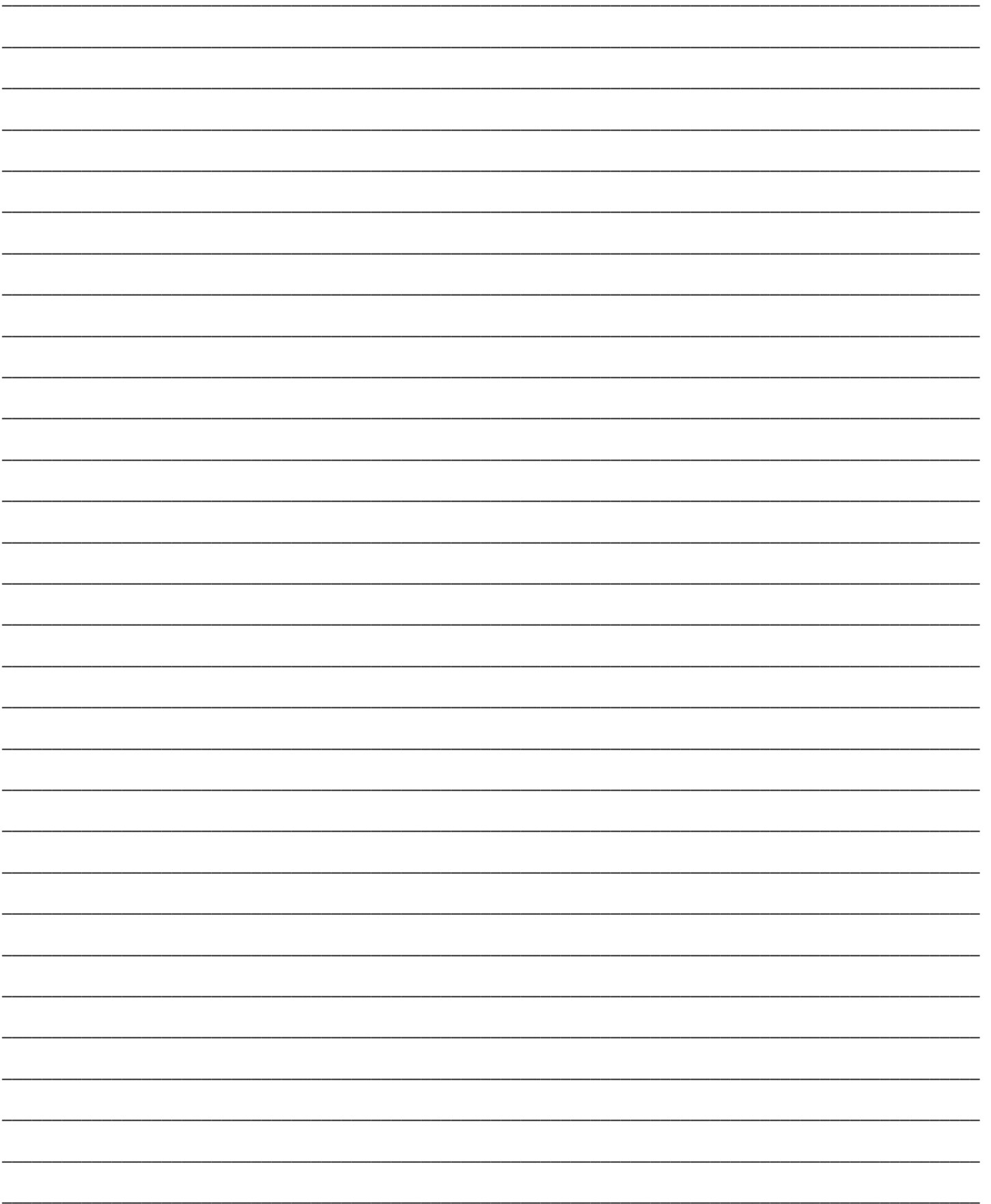
Journal

Action Step

Complete the next pages of this devotional guide to gather your thoughts, and complete a Commitment Card (paper or electronic) when you receive one.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for giving yourself for me. Give me a generous heart—free, joyful, and courageous. Lead me into my next faithful step. Amen.



How I sense God calling me to Prepare for the Bite

Over-and-above 36-month total commitment I/we can joyfully consider: \$ _____

How I/we would prefer to fulfill it (monthly / annually / other): _____



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