

# Ridgefield church installs prayer wall as symbol of solace

Alyssa Seidman

May 14, 2021 Updated: May 14, 2021 12:49 p.m.

[Comments](#)



1 of 6

Jeff Vreeland, left, John Ward, Bonnie and Phil Kearns and Senior Pastor Bill Pfohl, of Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church, pose outside the parish's Prayer Wall, an initiative aimed at bringing congregants and non-congregants together to share their hopes, desires and concerns as the world returns to normal.

Alyssa Seidman / Hearst Connecticut Media Group



RIDGEFIELD — A new initiative at Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church is turning heads in town.





Members of the Prayer Ministry have been working to construct a prayer wall for the campus at the corner of Main Street and King Lane. After Sunday morning worship service this weekend, churchgoers can join a blessing over the wall, which is aimed at bringing people together as the world returns to normal.

"People in the community have a lot of hopes and desires and concerns, and it's healthy ... to get those out there and for all of us to share them," congregant Phil Kearns said. "In my mind, (it's) a facilitator for a broader hope related to the power of prayer."

The idea to install a prayer wall came up when the ministry was discussing ways to engage people in prayer as the pandemic wanes. Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Bill Pfohl said since the church's mission is to serve as a "catalyst for connections," the initiative represents an opportunity for participants to pray in a way that is most comfortable to them.

"The journey back to normal (is) going to be challenging," Pfohl said. "There's a lot of folks who have experienced a lot of stress, so being a community of prayer and walking with folks and trusting that God is with us, that's an important part of what we want people to know."

The prayer wall will be open to the public starting Sunday until May 30. During that time, people can add their prayers to the wall.

Those wishing to share their prayers publicly can write them on a giant chalkboard that makes up the top half of the wall. Those wishing to keep their prayers private can insert a written message into the faux-stone base of the wall, akin to the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

The ministry will record and collect all the prayers during the two-week period to ensure each one is prayed over. "Amazing things happen when you ... lift everything up to God," congregant Bonnie Kearns said.

The Kearns' have been members of the church for 40 years, and although they had a hand in spearheading the prayer wall, Phil Kearns dubbed it a "Jesse Lee effort."

"To give people an opportunity to share what's in their heart publicly or privately is a wonderful thing," he added, "and we hope people take advantage of it."

The ministry plans to offer the prayer wall twice again later this year.

"When I pray with someone, it's a release," Bonnie Kearns said, "and in giving of that heartfelt hurt, there is healing."

*Jesse Lee Church is at 207 Main St. in Ridgefield.*

*alyssa.seidman@hearstmediact.com*