

## **‘My prayer tonight: fix our eyes on you, Jesus’**

By Caroline B. Mooney  
The Catholic Moment

WEST LAFAYETTE — The fifth annual prayer service celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity drew faithful from more than a dozen area churches together on Jan. 16 at Evangelical Covenant Church.

Other services also were held around the diocese including in Muncie.

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty joined other faith leaders for the ecumenical prayer service, which had the theme, “Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power.” (*Exodus 15:6*).

The International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was held Jan. 18-25. Deacon Jim Rush, diocesan ecumenical officer, has organized the local prayer service each year.

Community faith leaders participating included: Bishop Doherty; retired Father Ambrose Ziegler; Deacon Rush; Pastor Stacey Littlefield, Evangelical Covenant Church; Associate Pastor Joseph Seger, St. Andrew United Methodist Church; Rev. Bradley Pace, St. John’s Episcopal Church; Rev. Nancy Eberhard, director of pastoral care at University Place; Pastor Steve Crain, Lafayette Church of the Brethren; Pastor Tracey Leslie, Trinity United Methodist Church; Rev. Kevin Bowers, Bethany Presbyterian Church; Rev. David Doane, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church; Rev. Lisa William Hood, First Baptist; Pastor Will Peugeot, Our Savior Lutheran Church; Pastor David Shockey, Campus House, Purdue University; and Jordan Wells, Final Harvest International.

“The diversity and the beauty of the kingdom of God is an important theme for me personally for I have learned and continue to learn very much from the broader spectrum of the Christian church and tradition,” said Pastor Littlefield. “We leave this place a little bit more encouraged about the breadth of the Body of Christ and the depth of the fellowship that is possible with one another.”

The evening included songs of praise and worship led by an in-house band, with readings and prayers of petition.

In his sermon, Pastor Shockey said, “Unity is a theme that is incredibly close to my heart. In times as divided as we are living in today, I think it is a pertinent subject to be talking about and more importantly, to be praying about this evening.

“... As I think about the churches represented by the leaders behind me, we see a diversity of gifting and a diversity of expression of the beauty of the Body of Christ,” he said. “We have folks who are active in the feeding of hungry people ... We fight for the poor and we stand for economic justice, fight for the oppressed and we fight for racial equality. We minister to the sick. There’s Catholic hospitals in this community and many doctors of faith, and we stand for protecting and strengthening families and single moms. And immigrants and prisoners. And young people and old people.

“We focus our ministries on worship and ministering to the heart of God on prayer and interceding on the behalf of our city, evangelizing the lost, on teaching the word of God, on influencing our government for sane policy, and for expressing the beauty of God through the arts,” Pastor Shockey said. “There is a diversity of gifting that expresses the beauty of the immense God that we serve. We serve a God so big that not one of us on our own can serve the totality of the beauty of God. But as we stack ourselves up together in unity, we begin to see a picture of the heart of God painted over the city. ... He has given us his Holy Spirit -- the power necessary for us to unified here on earth.

“My prayer for us tonight is that you would fix our eyes on you, Jesus,” he said. “That you would draw each of these ministries, each of these congregations, closer to you. That Jesus you would be the head of our ministries, you would be the one who defines what we do. That you would be the one we are in love with and following and serving, and that Jesus you would reveal your glory to each of us.

Rev. Bowers said the service and week of Christian unity are extremely important so that “we don’t all get contained in our own little silos and too comfortable in our own expressions of the faith.”

“It’s vital that we are always reminded that we are part of a much larger expression of faith, a much larger Body of Christ,” he said. “So I wish more people would participate in this event. It is a deep and rich experience and I am glad to be a part of it.”

“It’s always important to spend time nurturing relationships with other members of the church,” Rev. Hood said. “This is my first year in Lafayette. I’ve never been to a service like this. It’s wonderful to be able to share the enormous things we have in common instead of dwelling on what separates us. I’m honored to be part of this.”