

## AEPS 40 DAYS OF PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION – Steve Shussett

For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore your servant has found courage to **pray** this prayer to you. *2 Sam 7:27*

May we trust in God's direction and will to build and use the house that is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### SCRIPTURE, DEVOTION AND PRAYER

**"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."** (NIV) (*Isaiah 40:31*)

I remember fondly my youth group days, singing that song that uses Isaiah 40 as lyrics. Do you know it?

*Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength  
They shall mount up like eagles  
With wings of great length  
They shall run and not be weary  
They shall walk and not faint  
He gives strength to the weary and power to his saints.*

It was an energetic and inspiring chorus. Sweet young thing that I was, I had little experience of what it might be like to have one's strength depleted; to grow weary; to feel faint. I was soaring and running and walking briskly through my new found life as a Christian. I was blessed with nearly inexhaustible enthusiasm for the church that brought me to Christ; the Presbyterian Church.

It was some years later, as an adult, I realized the true meaning of this passage of scripture and recognized its promise for the way of discipleship. Yes, I discovered that life in the church can, unfortunately, make one very weary indeed. (*If you do not know what I mean, God bless you.*)

For many of our leaders, it is not easy to be Church right now. In fact, it is exhausting. There is a reason these particular words of scripture were selected for this 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Please don't ask me to elaborate, I'm too tired.

These words of scripture were not written for the young, energetic, and naïve. They were written for old work horses like me who get very tired. They were written to remind us to practice what we preach.

*Gracious God,*

*We grow weary of what appears to be sheer determination to misunderstand one another. We grow weary of the endless search for magic formulas to make our churches grow in numbers and in faith. We grow weary of apologizing for mistakes others have made. We grow weary of listening to worries about money and leadership, and money. We long to have our strength renewed.*

*Still we praise your great name and give you thanks for all your blessings, especially for the saving love of Jesus Christ and the grace offered to us daily. We ask for your blessing on this 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and on all those who gather in your name.*

*Prepare your church for the future that only you know. Be our source of strength and renewal your people need, so we may not only face that future, but run towards it.*

*In Christ, Amen.*

**Linda Badger Becker**

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