

# Prayers of the People

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## Blessings for Every Season

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The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's  
Year-long Guide to Prayer

2025-2026

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# How to Use this Guide

## *Individual Sacred Space*

Use these reflections and blessings as a part of your personal devotional rhythm each week. Ponder the weekly reflection at the start of the week and allow the stories and perspectives to shape your prayer life in the days that follow.

## *In Worship*

Create a monthly “Mission Moment” in worship, sharing a story or prayer request from one of the weekly reflections, or use it as a prompt for children’s sermon each week. This year’s guide follows the broad strokes of the Revised Common Lectionary, making weekly blessings easy to incorporate into worship planning during Advent, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time.

## *Family Prayer*

Use this guide as a tool for teaching children and teens about prayer and introducing them to mission and ministry around the globe. You can read each week’s reflection as a family and invite conversation and reflection. Encourage kids to continue their exploration through research on the places, people groups and experiences mentioned.

## *Small Groups*

Create a short-term small group focused on themes around missions or prayer, or incorporate weekly reflections into a church leadership gathering (like a Missions or Ministry Council). Use the prayers here to prompt conversation in a Sunday school class, or as a guide for a weekly prayer meeting.

## *Children and Youth*

Mission teachers of *Pathlight* can use the guide to make connections with the lessons they are teaching. They can pass along prayers from particular CBF field personnel, places around the world or share blessings with their students. Share copies of *Prayers of the People* with parents and families of children. See [www.cbf.net/pathlight](http://www.cbf.net/pathlight) for more information about this free weekly download.

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## To Order More

Visit [www.cbf.net/ogm](http://www.cbf.net/ogm) or contact CBF at 800-352-8741 to order more copies of *Prayers of the People*. Include in welcome packets to church visitors and display on magazine racks.

# Introduction

Readers who have used *Prayers of the People* previously may notice a change in structure for this year's guide. Rather than conclude each weekly reflection with the "Pray, Practice, Ponder" section, the vast majority of reflections end with the blessing itself. This choice is intentional. As you will see, these blessings speak for themselves, and we want to invite you to linger in the space they open in your heart and mind, between you and God. You are invited to read each blessing slowly, letting the words wash over you and settle into you. Over time, if you notice that the blessings naturally invite you into pondering, reflection, discussion or prayer, then allow them to carry you wherever they lead.

This year's *Prayers of the People* is organized around the following themes:

- **Biblical Blessings** – These blessings come either directly from scripture or are inspired by the themes of scripture, including biblical stories, characters, prayers and poetry.
- **Liturgical Blessings** – These are blessings grouped for the following the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent and Easter.
- **Blessings Around the World** – These blessings offer reflections from field personnel around the world and explore the nature of blessing and being blessed with their local context.
- **Threshold Blessings** – This section offers words of blessing for the expansive, sometimes difficult, experiences of being human, including blessings for a new diagnosis, blessings for our children and blessings for grief.
- **Everyday Blessings** – These blessings invite us to remain connected to God in the ordinary and everyday moments of our lives.

## Design Team

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# Welcome

**Meg Lacy**

*Editor, Prayers of the People*



When I was in my first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education training to become a hospital chaplain, I had a gracious teacher who often asked the same question when someone in our student group was struggling to accept their human imperfections. He would listen thoughtfully as we expressed our self-criticism, distress or frustration. And then he would say: “I wonder... Can you bless that part of yourself?” To be honest, the idea of blessing the messy imperfect parts of me felt more difficult than walking into most hospital rooms. But over time, this question began to sink in, and along with it a deeper sense of God’s presence and goodness in my life, even (or especially) in the messy and difficult parts. I was awakening to the power of blessing.

Over the last few years, there has been a revival in the practice of blessing throughout Christian circles. A number of books of blessings have been published, from Jan Richardson’s *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons* (2015), to Kate Bowler’s *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days* (2023), and Cole Arthur Riley’s *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human* (2024). As our world has grown increasingly chaotic, unpredictable and divided, it is no surprise to me that our need for blessing has increased. Now, more than ever, we need the sacred spiritual practice of blessing ourselves, and one another, through the difficult and beautiful moments of our lives.

In the prayer guide you now hold in your hand, we hope to do just that. I cannot contain my delight at sharing these beautiful, poignant and spiritually potent blessings with you. These blessings from across our fellowship have been my companion over the past few months, frequently moving me to tears and laughter, awe and reflection, and I have no doubt they will touch you deeply, too. It is my prayer that they will be a companion for you in the year ahead, a form of spiritual sustenance and a frequent reminder of God’s goodness, and your own blessedness. I invite you to welcome each week’s blessing as you would a friend. Open yourself to it. Receive it with open hands (metaphorically or even literally). Let it linger with you long after you have turned the page, letting its truths echo in your soul.

These blessings are a reminder that it is truly a rich fellowship we are a part of in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. May you be blessed by these words, and may you practice the act of blessing those around you along the way.

## **A Blessing for Reading**

As you set out,  
do not go without a blessing.

May you feel the warmth of these words  
wash over you  
like a baptism,  
or a prayer.

May they sink into your heart,  
seep into your mind,  
wrap themselves around your body,  
like a protection  
and a calling.

May each blessing  
open you  
to new awareness  
of the Holy One  
who blesses,  
the One  
who sees your mess,  
and beauty,  
your humanity,  
and your divinity,  
and never fails  
to call you  
good.



# Biblical Blessings

Blessings inspired  
by scripture

SEPTEMBER 28

## The Good Life

*Jeremiah Banks*

*Associate Pastor of Spiritual Formation,  
First Baptist Church, Corbin, Kentucky*



### Matthew 5:7 (paraphrased)

“The Good Life belongs to those who show mercy, because they will be shown mercy”

I love to listen to podcasts. When I heard the creators of the popular “The Bible Project” podcast translate the usual word “blessed” as “the good life” in their series on the Sermon on the Mount, something unlocked within me. For me, “blessed” can sometimes feel like empty religious language—something you can find sewn onto a pillow rather than the type of radical statement I expect to hear from the mouth of Jesus.

“The good life belongs to those who mourn, for they will be comforted,”—Matthew 5:4 (paraphrased)

There are a lot of definitions of what it means to live a “good life” or what the “good life” looks like. The world of politics tells us power, partisan politics and putting yourself and your party’s positions first is the key. Hyper-spirituality tells us escaping the cares of the world is how you find blessing. The world of social media attempts to boil the good life down to our highlight reels. Each of these perspectives may be valid in their own way. But none of them sound quite like Jesus to me, the man who, upon seeing the crowds, sat down and began to teach: “The good life belongs to those who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

What would it look like for you to flourish? For our communities to believe Jesus meant what he said? What if the values of non-violence, self-sacrifice and mutuality aren’t just pleasant ideas, but really are the moral arc of the universe? If this is what the good life looks like, then the meek must be the ones moving with the grain of the universe after all.

# The Good Life

A blessing inspired by Amos 5:18-24

There will be days when we get it all backwards.  
Where we will long for the end of God's good world.  
Where—at the rate we are going—the world will end in darkness, not light.  
And we will like it.

O Holy One,  
May our hearts beat right.  
May we resist our desire to escape.

When the roaring of markets and politics come charging at us,  
where can we turn?  
When we weary and we thirst  
from our needs and the world's needs,  
how can we dream?

If we long for darkness, may it be the darkness that dilates.  
When we are tempted to fill our time together with smoke and mirrors,  
may we remember how quickly an opened window can clear the air.

And when the new heavens and the new earth come ringing,  
may the noise we hear be from our own mouths.  
May we sing alongside the birds,  
chirping of the possibility  
of a world where  
all can stand on common ground.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

28 Jonathan Amaya, Houston, TX (CH)  
28 Renate Krukliis, Braselton, GA (CH)  
29 Asbrubal Forte, Miami, FL (CH)  
29 John Harris, Pelham, AL (PC)  
30 Rachel Webb, College Station, TX (CH)  
30 Todd Weber, Louisville, KY (CH)  
1 Tina Boyles Bailey, Austria (FP)  
1 Faith Bynoe (S-CBF Global)

2 Maha Boulos, Emeritus (FP)  
2 Keith Holmes, Emeritus (FP)  
3 Jonathan Bailey, Indonesia (FP)  
3 Andrew Finkler, Fayetteville, NC (CH)  
3 Matt Norman, Spain (FP)  
4 Jana Lee, Cyprus (FP)  
4 Michael Metcalf, Statesville, NC (CH)

OCTOBER 5

## Learning to Be

**Casey Ramirez**

*Field Personnel in Baguio, Philippines*



### **Psalm 46:10**

“Be still, and know that I am God!

I am exalted among the nations;

I am exalted in the earth.”

As a native Texan, I spent my childhood near the relatively small hills scattered around southwest Dallas County. In college, I would sometimes joke that Waco was so flat that we could see all the way to Oklahoma on a clear day! Mountains were a foreign concept to me. I’ve had the privilege of visiting places near the Rockies, the Appalachians and the Alps, but only for short trips. And I never really paid attention to the mountains. They were just part of the background.

We now live in Baguio, Philippines—a bustling city situated at approximately the same elevation as Denver. Its elevation and mountainous terrain give it the benefit of comfortable temperatures most of the year, which is good because walking anywhere is basically hiking. As you can imagine, the mountains make for beautiful scenery. It is hard to go anywhere in the city without a grand view of at least one of the mountain peaks in the distance. But the mountains aren’t just in the background here. We are surrounded by them. We live on them.

And yet, one of my favorite things is the shift of the weather mid-day, when the clouds climb over the peaks and completely envelop the city and the surrounding mountains in this thick, impenetrable, puffy blanket of damp and silence. The mountains fade away, the city becomes still and for a little while, everything seems to disappear into a sea of gray. A few minutes later, the clouds will drop their rain and move higher into the sky, and everything will go back to how it was before.

I think we all need times like these that cause us to experience life in a different way than we usually do. Amid our hectic schedules and busy lives, we need times that cause us (maybe even force us) to stop and just be. Just for a little while. Perhaps it is in these times that we might also experience God in a different way than we usually do.

## A Blessing for Being

Wherever you find yourself right now,  
whether at work,  
or at home,  
or in one of the countless other places,  
remember that God calls you to  
“Be still and know that I am God.”

Despite the schedules and the busyness of today,  
may the peace of God cover you  
like clouds blanket a mountain.  
God calls you to  
“Be still and know that I am.”

Amidst your comings and goings, may you pause  
long enough for your lungs to fill with good, deep breath.  
Remember to  
“Be still and know.”

May you make the time to  
find God in the quiet.  
“Be still.”

Stop what you are doing and just  
“Be.”

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
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5 Kate Blackshear, Austin, TX (CH)  
5 Jo Ann Hopper, Emeritus (FP)  
5 Gregory Thompson, Oakwood, GA (CH)  
5 Chris Towles (S-North Carolina)  
6 Margie Rivera (S-CBF Global)  
7 Daniel Brockhan, Cheektowaga, NY (CH)  
7 Melissa Rodriguez (S-Florida/CBF Global)  
8 Lucas Dorion (S-Alabama)  
8 Melissa Kremer (S-Georgia)

8 Robb Small, Geismar, LA (CH)  
10 Larry Aaron, Danville, VA (CH)  
10 Joseph Boone, Cold Spring, KY (CH)  
10 Beth Duke, Smithville, TN (CH)  
10 Jay Martin, Woodland Park, CO (PC)  
10 Cinda Smith, Batesville, AR (CH)  
10 Tina Woody, Spartanburg, SC (CH)  
11 Randi McFarland, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
11 Laura Senter, Everett, WA (CH)

OCTOBER 12

## Ezekiel's Blessing

**Caleb Cooke**

*Senior Pastor, Village Baptist Church,  
Bowie, Maryland*



### **Ezekiel 34:25-26**

“I will make with [my flock] a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing,”

When I was growing up, something that always confused me was how often people talked about rain. I have distinct memories of my dad looking to the sky and saying something about the yard being dry and “needing rain.” Similarly, after almost every rain, my grandpa would say, like clockwork, “Yep, we needed it!” But what really confused me was when people wanted it to rain. Child me viewed rain as an inhibitor, because there were many things you couldn’t (or wouldn’t) do in the rain. Rain cancels events and ruins outdoor birthday parties, so why would anyone say we need rain?

I’m glad to say that I’ve since learned the way weather can act as a level playing field for conversation. I have come to appreciate all the ways rain is vital. In fact, as I cross many thresholds in my life—for example, having a lawn of my own to deal with, as well as the beginning of our church’s community garden ministry—I often find myself looking up wondering when it’s going to rain. Recently, I even caught myself saying, “Yep, we needed it!”

If we take this text from the prophet Ezekiel as an example, we can view God’s blessing as a soft rain over picturesque hills dotted with grazing sheep. There are many places to find ourselves in this living landscape. See the sheep blissfully unaware of how long it has been since it rained, thus taking God’s blessing only as it comes? Look, there’s a weary farmer feeling the weight of drought lift off his shoulders! Wow, I wonder what stories that tree’s rings could tell, stories of drought and torrential downpours.

As I think back, the throwaway “Yep, we needed it!” tells a deep story of lived experience from people who have watched crops grow and watched them wither. This

phrase ties together those who have felt the ground crack beneath their feet and those who have seen puddles form in long-dry ditches. It's the kind of phrase that makes sense only when you've gone without something vital for a while. Something life-giving.

Maybe you're in a dry season wondering if the showers of blessing will come. Maybe you're in a flash flood of God's favor. Maybe you're somewhere in between. Wherever you are, that simple phrase still speaks, not just to the rain that has fallen, but to the truth that we depend on something beyond ourselves; to the truth that we are not self-sustaining and we are not alone.

"Yep, we needed it."

## Ezekiel's Blessing

from Ezekiel 34:25-26

I will make with [my flock] a covenant of peace  
and banish wild animals from the land,  
so that they may live in the wild  
and sleep in the woods securely.

I will make them  
and the region around my hill  
a blessing,  
and I will send down the showers  
in their season;  
they shall be showers of blessing.

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12 Melba Miller, Gainesville, GA (CH)  
12 Ben Newell, Emeritus (FP)  
12 Terry-Michael Newell, Zebulon, NC (PC)  
12 Loren (Greg) Sink, Fayetteville, NC (Ret-CH)  
13 Lloyd Blevins, Fayetteville, NC (CH)  
13 Bob Newell, Emeritus (FP)  
13 John Painter, Charleston, SC (CH)  
13 Gretchen Watson, Louisville, KY (PC)  
14 Yarelis Montex de Oca, Miami FL (CH)  
14 Yuri Sekscinski, Temple, TX (CH)  
16 Matthew Andrews, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
16 Karen Black, Fort Worth, TX (CH)

16 Betty Drayton, Sumter, SC (CH)  
16 Greg Greason, Kansas City, MO (CH)  
16 Sarah Neeley, Tyler, TX (CH)  
16 Monty Self, Little Rock, AR (CH)  
17 David Fambrough, Greenville, NC (CH)  
18 Hank Demous, Opelika, AL (CH)  
18 Nick Clanton, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
18 Jesus Garcia, Reddick, FL (CH)  
18 Danny Garnett, Irmo, SC (PC)  
16 Cameron Mason Vickery (S-Fellowship  
Southwest)  
18 Jenine Crew (S-CBF Global)

OCTOBER 19

## Compassionate Presence

*Jana Lee*

*Field Personnel in Larnaca, Cyprus*



### Matthew 25:35-36

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

The following blessing is inspired by Matthew 25:35-40. This passage speaks about caring for the hungry, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned—and how in serving the least of these, we serve Christ Himself. I chose to rewrite this scripture because this is how I strive to live and work in the world. These verses remind me to live with an open heart, an open mind and open hands. They remind me that when I care for people in need, it is truly what God wants. These words call us to see every act of kindness, no matter how small, as meaningful. Through compassion, we become a reflection of God’s love to the world around us.

### A Blessing of Compassionate Presence

Inspired by Matthew 25:35–40

May your heart be open to the hungry,  
And may your hands be quick to feed.  
May your door swing wide for the stranger,  
And may your soul welcome those in need.  
May your presence bring warmth to the cold,  
And your words bring comfort to the weary.  
May your eyes see Christ in every face—  
In the lonely, the lost, the overlooked.  
May you walk where mercy is needed,  
And speak where justice longs to be heard.

May your life echo the kindness of Heaven,  
 And may love be your most fluent word.  
 For every act of compassion,  
 Though small in the eyes of the world,  
 Is a seed in the soil of eternity,  
 And a gift unto the King.  
 And as you serve the least of these,  
 May you know—deep in your spirit—  
 That you are walking beside Jesus Himself.  
 He sees. He remembers. He calls you blessed.  
 Amen.

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20 Richard Brown, Roanoke, VA (CH)  
 20 Annette Ellard, Louisville, KY (FP)  
 20 Chuck Hawkins, Pearland, TX (CH)  
 20 Luke Langston, Durham, NC (CH)  
 20 Abby Nichols, Nashville, TN (CH)  
 22 Keith Cooper, Lubbock, TX (CH)  
 22 Paul Robertson, Sugar Land, TX (CH)  
 23 John Lassitter, Martindale, TX (CH)  
 23 Carl Price, Lebanon, TN (CH)

23 John Ray Roberts, Blacksburg, VA (CH)  
 23 Michael Weaver, Beaver, WV (CH)  
 24 Charles Lumpkin, Greensboro, NC (CH)  
 24 Wes Monfalcone, Casselberry, FL (CH)  
 24 Robert Powell, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
 24 Rick Ruano, North Miami Beach, FL (CH)  
 25 Doug Cobb, McGregor, TX (CH)  
 25 Nina Golston (S-CBF Global)  
 25 Suzie, Southeast Asia (FP)

OCTOBER 26

## Busting Roofs

**Michelle Norman**

*Field Personnel in Barcelona, Spain*



### Mark 2:1-5 (NLT)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

Recently, I have been reflecting on the story of the men who carried the paralytic man to Jesus. Specifically, I've been considering two points I had not previously considered. First, the scripture doesn't tell us the men who carried the paralytic were his friends. We generally assume they were, but we do not know that for sure. Second, the roofs were thick, and it would have been difficult to bust a hole in it large enough to lower a man through it. It also would have created quite a racket, and definitely would have upset those listening to Jesus teach! The more I pondered these two points, the more convinced I am that the actions of these men were far more radical than I initially believed. It involved risk, it involved hard work and it was all done for someone they may or may not have considered a friend. The radical nature of this story has inspired me to consider for whom I might need to bust through roofs in order for them to have an encounter with Jesus. Where do I need to have courage to do the hard work, and maybe even cause a disruption, so that people can go beyond the barriers that keep them from Jesus.

Maybe, given the state of our world today, you find yourself in a similar place. I offer you this blessing for when you need the courage to bust through some roofs.

# A Blessing for When You Need Courage to Bust through Some Roofs

Blessings on you, dear friend.

You were just living your life and as you walked, you encountered the paralytic man, the homeless man, the hurting mother, the unemployed, the discouraged, the bullied.

Blessings on you for stopping to respond to the call for help.

Blessings on you for gathering your friends to join in the response.

You carried the man in, hoping to see Jesus and when you arrived, you were blocked from seeing him.

But you would not let the barriers hold you back. You knew that what this man needed...what the world needed, was an encounter with the Messiah.

Blessings on you for doing the hard work, for rolling up your sleeves and digging through the roof. Blessings on you for finding a way.

When the barriers seem overwhelming and the way unclear, may you have the courage to carry your neighbor to the one who loves them more than they can imagine.

Blessings on you as you find courage to bust through some roofs.

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

26 Dean Dickens, Emeritus (FP)  
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27 Kathy Hoppe, Broken Arrow, OK (CH)  
27 Terrell Moye, Palm Beach Gardens, FL (CH)  
29 Mike Hutchinson, Emeritus (FP)  
29 Sam Scaggs, Dublin, GA (CH)

29 Troy Todd, Norfolk, VA (CH)  
30 Richard Brown, Troutville, VA (CH)  
30 Hazel Thomas, Arlington, TX (CH)  
31 Abina Johnson, New Orleans, LA (CH)  
1 Kasey Jones (S-CBF Global)  
1 Lynne Mouchet, Johns Creek, GA (CH)

NOVEMBER 2

## Blessing of Lament

*Scarlette Jasper*

*Field Personnel in Corbin, Kentucky*



### Psalm 42:9-11a

I say to God my Rock,  
    ‘Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
    oppressed by the enemy?’  
My bones suffer mortal agony  
    as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
    ‘Where is your God?’  
Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
    Why so disturbed within me?

Lament, while seemingly negative, can actually be a source of blessing. It allows for the expression of pain, grief and doubt, leading to a deeper understanding of oneself and a stronger relationship with God. By acknowledging our vulnerabilities and trusting in God’s strength, we can move from despair to hope and find renewed faith.

Lament can be a blessing.

Lament provides a space to express our feelings of hurt, anger and frustration without judgment. It’s a way to communicate our needs and seek God’s help and comfort. By acknowledging our limitations and expressing our vulnerabilities, we can learn to trust God more fully. This process helps us to understand God’s grace, love and faithfulness. The process of lament can lead to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our relationship with God. It can help us see the world from a new perspective and grow in our faith.

Lament is not just an end in itself; it can pave the way for hope and praise.

By expressing our pain, we can move towards a renewed sense of hope and trust in God's plan. When we bring our grief to God, we become more aware of the suffering of others and are more likely to listen to their pain with empathy and compassion. In essence, lament is a powerful tool for spiritual growth and healing, allowing us to navigate difficult times with grace and peace.

## **Blessing: Psalm 42**

As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?  
My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”  
These things I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.  
Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.  
My soul is downcast within me;  
therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.  
Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me.  
By day the Lord directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.  
I say to God my Rock,  
“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?”

My bones suffer mortal agony  
as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”  
Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

2 Karen Alford, Togo (FP)  
2 Mark Elder, Spartanburg, SC (CH)  
2 Jesse Hunt, Landstuhl, Germany (CH)  
2 Mickie Norman, Leland, NC (CH)  
2 Lindsay Winslow, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
2 Ryan Yaun, Wetumpka, AL (CH)  
3 Michael McCawley, Fort Bragg, NC (CH)  
3 David Reid, Boise, ID (CH)  
4 Laura Ayala (S-CBF Global)  
4 Tarvick Linder, Korea (CH)  
5 Cameron Gunnin, San Antonio, TX (CH)

5 August Higgins, San Antonio, TX (CH)  
6 Kyle Fishbaugh, Fayetteville, NC (CH)  
6 Gloria Hopper, Monroe, NC (CH)  
6 Jeff Lee, North Macedonia (FP)  
6 Meghan McSwain, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
7 Craig Butler, Sugar Land, TX (CH)  
7 Pat Coley, Talofofo, Guam (CH)  
7 Darrell Hudson, Georgetown, TX (CH)  
8 Jay Kieve (S-CBF Global)  
8 Evan Sieges, Burlington, NC (CH)  
8 Mark Weiler, Greeley, CO (CH)

NOVEMBER 9

## Stretch without Fear

**Ossie McKinney**

*Director of Research and Administration  
and Consultant, CBF Outreach and Growth*



### **Isaiah 54:2-3a**

Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left...

When I first stepped into ministry leadership, I felt like the space I occupied—emotionally, spiritually, even physically—was just enough for what I thought I could handle. I was content with boundaries that felt familiar and manageable. But life has a way of unfolding differently than we plan. In one season, I was asked to serve in a way that stretched me beyond what I thought I could bear. I resisted. I feared failure. I feared exposure. I feared being found out as not enough. And then I came across Isaiah 54.

This passage met me like a gentle but firm push from the Spirit: “Do not hold back... stretch... lengthen... strengthen.” It felt less like a command and more like an invitation to step into a promise. A covenant of peace. A heritage of assurance. A blessing not only for me, but for all of us who serve God while sometimes wondering if we’re doing it well enough. Isaiah 54 doesn’t ignore hardship. It names desolation, shame, rejection and fear. But it reframes them. We are told to sing anyway. We are invited to expand even when we feel barren. We are blessed with the promise that God will teach our children, protect our lives and establish us in righteousness.

This is a covenant not of striving but of belonging. And it is my prayer of blessing for you.

# Stretch Without Fear

A blessing inspired by Isaiah 54:2-3

May you stretch without fear.  
May you lengthen what has felt too short,  
and open what has felt too tight.

May you let God enlarge your space of influence,  
or healing,  
or rest,  
whatever it is you need.

May you not hold back.  
Not because you are unafraid,  
but because God goes before you.  
You are covered by a covenant of peace.  
You will not be put to shame.  
This is your heritage as a servant of the Lord.  
Amen.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

- 9 Debby Bradley, Owensboro, KY (CH)
- 9 Charles Seligman, San Antonio, TX (CH)
- 9 Audrey Wilson, Durham, NC (CH)
- 10 Brooke, Waco, Texas (FP)
- 10 Kevin Crowder, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)
- 10 Holly Johnson, St. Petersburg, FL (CH)
- 10 Ralph Mikels, Jr., Seymour, TN (CH)
- 10 Jim Smith, Emeritus (FP)
- 11 Scott Blair, Bethesda, VA (CH)
- 11 Dana Durham, Sacramento, CA (CH)
- 11 Phoebe Khano, 2010, Belgium (FPC)
- 11 Bert Sanders III, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)

- 11 Steve Sweatt, Birmingham, AL (PC)
- 12 Jason Coker (S-Together for Hope)
- 12 John Lepper, Crestwood, KY (PC)
- 13 Shelia Earl, Emeritus (FP)
- 13 Matthew Posten, Louisville, KY (CH)
- 13 Gail Smith, Hillsborough, NC (CH)
- 13 Cindy Wallace, Sterling, VA (CH)
- 14 Katie Anderson, Louisville, KY (CH)
- 15 Elizabeth Eaton, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)
- 15 David Simmons, Harrisburg, PA (CH)
- 15 Eric Whitfield, Cheyenne, WY (CH)

NOVEMBER 16

## Nine Blessings

**David Brooks**

*Pastor, First Baptist Church,  
Rome, Georgia*



### Matthew 5:9 (The Message)

You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

The Bible is full of blessings. We cannot read very far in any book of the Bible without encountering a blessing from God or a blessing that one person shares with another. But some blessings stand out from all the others—blessings such as those that we find in the Beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5. These nine blessings from Jesus at the start of his most famous sermon set the tone for life with him. They are gifts from Jesus to us, reminding us that even when we hurt, when we are frustrated, when we mourn and when we are weary, we are blessed because we do not face life alone and our lives are held lovingly in the hands of God.

In my attempts to follow Jesus faithfully, I come back to these beloved blessings of Jesus time and again. I draw strength and my spirit is renewed when I carry just one of these blessings with me in my heart and mind throughout a given day or week. Reciting a blessing from Jesus brings me back to him and puts my day in the right perspective.

Even as Jesus blesses me, I wonder how I can be a blessing by reflecting his meekness, his hunger and thirst for righteousness, his mercy, his peace. And the blessing that he gives to all who strive to make peace might be the most relevant and timely blessing for our world today that is rife with division and distrust: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9, NRSV). Or, in the always practical language of *The Message*: "You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family."

God blesses every effort that we make to resist the temptations of competing and fighting with one another. Cooperating and making peace in our relationships, even and especially with our opponents and enemies, is a true source of God blessing us

all. And when we choose to make peace, when we attempt to understand someone else, when we show people how to cooperate, we live into our authentic identity as children of God—children who are beloved, blessed and befriended by Jesus. May the peace and blessing of Christ be with you.

## You're Blessed

Matthew 5:3-12, *The Message*

You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

16 Lori Gooden (S-Fellowship Southwest)  
16 Margaret Harvey, Austin, TX (CH)  
16 Edwin Hollis, Odenville, AL (CH)  
16 Gloria Hopper, Monroe, NC (CH)  
16 Anita Snell Daniels, Emeritus (FP)  
16 Andrew Stubblefield, Pensacola, FL (CH)  
17 Benjamin Burton, Louisville, KY (CH)  
17 Elizabeth Thompson, Littleton, CO (PC)  
18 Elaine Greer, Frankfort, KY (CH)

18 Kristin Long, Richmond, VA (PC)  
19 T. Nancy Cox, Georgetown, KY (CH)  
19 Will Kinnaird, Keller, TX (CH)  
20 Chuck Christie, Loganville, GA (CH)  
20 Lindsi Hines (S-CBF Global)  
20 Kevin Park, Bellingham, WA (CH)  
21 Fred Madren, Indianapolis, IN (CH)  
21 Janet Pittman, Emeritus (FP)  
22 Becky Smith, Emeritus (FP)

NOVEMBER 23

## A Blessing for Reading the Word

**Kirk**

*Field Personnel in Southeast Asia*



As one who has been involved in two Bible translations for people groups where believers comprise less than one percent of the population, I have had the opportunity to see people reading and understanding the Word for the first time. It is fascinating to hear their reactions and listen to how they feel what they have read would apply in their cultural setting. By contrast, so many of us in the United States are used to having dozens of translations on our bookshelves or smartphones—perhaps this wealth of scripture causes us to forget the incredible significance of the Word. I struggle to remind myself to approach the Word with humility—and give it my full attention despite mountains of internal and external distractions. Below is a blessing to use before you read scripture.

### **A Blessing for the Reading of the Word**

As you open this book  
May your mind be calmed  
Your ears sharpened  
Your heart quieted

May your reading inspire you  
Challenge you  
Break your heart  
Heal you

May you be mindful of the wonder of scripture  
Always there  
Always waiting  
A book longing to be read

May you remember those who have never known  
The miracle of these words  
In the language of their hearts  
In a place of freedom

May you listen as God speaks  
Silent in His presence  
Still as a weaned child  
The rushing world far away

And may you emerge from this time  
A mustard seed sprouting  
A light learning to shine  
A blessing

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S = CBF Staff Member

23 Heather Hurd, San Antonio, TX (CH)  
23 Katrina Martin, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
23 Dihanne Moore (S-CBF Global)  
23 Julie Walton, Richmond, VA (CH)  
24 Will Barnes, Savannah, GA (CH)  
24 Lynn Brinkley (S-CBF Global)  
24 Robert Fox (S-Church Benefits Board)  
24 Will Manley, Johnson City, TN (CH)  
24 David Posey, Medina, TN (CH)  
24 Ruth Santos-Ortíz, Atlanta, GA (PC)  
25 Leigh Anne Armstrong, Auburn, AL (CH)  
25 Gary Batchelor, Rome, GA (CH)  
25 Tony Biles, Richfield, NC (CH)  
25 Robert Cooke, Selma, NC (PC)  
25 Ed Farris, Topeka, KS (CH)

25 Brad Hood, Knoxville, TN (CH)  
25 Chan Shaver, Jamestown, NC (CH)  
25 Sue Smith, Emeritus (FP)  
25 Lee Weems, Pineville, LA (CH)  
25 Cassandra Wilson, Gahanna, OH (CH)  
26 Carol Fletcher, Athens, GA (CH)  
26 Michael O'Rourke, Durham, NC (CH)  
26 Randy Penneroud, Anderson, SC (CH)  
27 Macarena Aldape, Emeritus (FP)  
27 Posey Branscome, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
27 Shauw Chin Capps (S-CBF Global)  
28 Ronald King, Midland, GA (PC)  
28 Mark Tidsworth, Chapin, SC (PC)  
28 Joel Whitley, Emeritus (FP)  
29 Paul Mullen, Clemmons, NC (CH)



# Advent Blessings

Blessings for seasons  
of waiting and for  
those longing for light

NOVEMBER 30

## Blessing for Hope

**Ashley Gill Harrington**

*Associate Pastor of Children and Church  
Communication, Georgetown Baptist  
Church, Georgetown, Kentucky*



### **Isaiah 11:1**

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Perhaps it is no surprise that in scripture we see God as a gardener, speaking and planting at creation, cultivating and tending the created world, pruning and grafting. In the Gospels, we hear Jesus refer to himself as the vine and God as the one who painstakingly cuts to make a way for a fruitful harvest. Only with care and connection do we flourish and produce fruit.

Not until we find dirt under our fingernails do we understand the patience and discipline in gardening. With spades and trowels, we dare to co-create something new that is beautiful and bountiful just as God did in Genesis.

### **A Blessing for Co-Creation**

Blessed are we who plant seeds in the soil as a tangible act of hope.

We let go and trust that with time, water and care, we will eventually bear witness to the power and mystery that happens where we cannot see it.

Blessed are we who impatiently await the first signs of sprouts to break through the surface. And when they do—what joy!

Our hope was not in vain.

Our faithfulness in watering and waiting has helped to bring new life.

But we know our job is far from over.

We must now cultivate and tend, prune and graft.

Blessed are we whose prayers take the form of watering cans, compost and trellises. Consistent prayers that keep the soil healthy, weeds and pests removed, diseases managed. A daily rhythm of nurturing that makes the difference between withering and thriving.

Blessed are we who also find unwarranted success with fruit that appears despite our neglect, who find failure in hungry bunnies who nibble away at delicate stalks and who water, protect, nurture, fertilize and simply hope for the best.

Blessed are we who hope that despite the unpredictable weather and the ecosystem of insects and the myriad of factors outside of our control, plants will grow and even flourish. Hope that can be harvested in flowers, fruit and vegetables. Hope that is manifested in a ripe tomato and blooming rose. Hope that is made real only when we dare to dig in the dirt.

Blessed are we who plant and toil when it feels like we labor in vain. May we plant the seeds of God's New Day with the hope that it too will eventually break through.

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30 Jeffrey Ross, Washington, DC (CH)  
1 Joseph Farry, Greenville, SC (CH)  
1 Claire George, Richmond, VA (CH)  
1 Amy Jacober, Phoenix, AZ (CH)  
2 Daniel Attenberry, Owensboro, KY (CH)  
2 Connie Beemer, Kirkwood, MO (CH)  
3 Rosemary Barfield, Jeffersonville, IN (CH)  
3 Ed Beddingfield, Buies Creek, NC (PC)  
3 Rachel Gunter Shapard (S-Together for Hope)  
3 James Heath, Dry Prong, LA (CH)

3 Andy Jung (S-North Carolina)  
3 Shane McNary (S-Great Rivers Fellowship)  
3 Gennady Podgaisky, Poland (FP)  
3 David Wilson, Chapel Hill, NC (CH)  
4 Jose Albovias, Louisville, KY (CH)  
4 Elizabeth Richards, Emeritus (FP)  
4 Myles Shipp, Gloucester, VA (CH)  
5 Kenn Lowther, Columbus, OH (CH)  
5 Chris O'Rear, Nashville, TN (PC)

DECEMBER 7

## Blessing for Peace

*Gennady Podgaisky*

*Field Personnel in Krakow, Poland*



### Isaiah 2:4

He shall judge between the nations  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;  
neither shall they learn war any more.

As I write these words on May 13, 2025, the 1,185th day of full-scale war in Ukraine carries on. A church we attended while living in Kyiv has prayed daily for the end of the war and for peace to come in Ukraine since the very first day of the war. Prayer warriors faithfully continue to meet every day, bringing “...prayers and petitions, with thanksgiving, presenting their requests to God” (Phil. 4:6). Despite the challenges and hardships, prayers for the end of the war and physical protection, there is also thankfulness and gratefulness. There is also a deep desire to be a blessing and faithful carriers of the Good News and God’s peace to near and far “neighbors.” Below are a few excerpts from my conversations and prayers with two Ukrainian ministers who live, serve and thrive in a war-torn country.

“I am thankful to God for my family, which is still intact and alive. I am grateful for God’s physical protection last night and the nights before. Even though there is some damage in the city from last night’s rockets and drone attacks, it could have been worse. I am grateful for God’s provision for my family. In the last several days, we lived like the Israelites in the desert—God fed them manna from heaven which was provided every day. We live in such a period when God provides our daily needs from different sources, and we have our daily bread.”

“Thank you, Lord, for your mercy and grace, that this day we have the opportunity to live and serve others. Thank you for your mercy that renews us every day, as it is written in scripture, ‘New, fresh mercies greet me with every sunrise. So wonderfully great is your faithfulness!’ (Lamentations 3:23). Thank you for your provision every new day and that we can do what you entrusted us to do every day. Thank you for

people who support our lives and our service to you, who encourage us, who are praying for us, who carry us in the hands of prayer.”

“Thank you, Lord, for the special grace which you provide in order for us to serve others so that we, as your church, will be able to be present where there is great need and that we will be able to testify to people about your glory, to sow seeds of your Word in people’s hearts. Thank you, Lord, that we can stand firm and serve people in these hard circumstances for three years already. You lead us and protect us. You have a plan and intention for my life amid many hardships, challenges and war. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to serve others and to bring your Gospel to the people.”

Let us join these two persons and many other faithful followers of Christ in their prayers for the advancement of God’s Kingdom in people’s hearts in different parts of God’s world. Let us be a blessing to our spouses, children, extended family, neighbors, co-workers and anyone whom God brings into our path. I am a channel and not a well of God’s blessings. I am blessed to be a blessing! Let God’s blessing flow through me. Amen!

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7 Robert Wilder, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
8 Tommy Deal, Palmyra, VA (CH)  
8 Edward Erwin, Chesapeake, VA (CH)  
8 Shane Gaster, Deland, FL (CH)  
8 Virginia King, Columbia, SC (CH)  
8 Donald Kriner, Canton, GA (CH)  
9 Julie Brown, Emeritus (FP)  
9 Timothy Gregory, Reno, NV (CH)  
9 Wayne Hyatt, Spartanburg, SC (PC)  
9 Herman Meza, Rota, Spain (CH)

10 Beth Roberts, Chapel Hill, NC (CH)  
10 Keith Stillwell (S-Together for Hope)  
10 Gary Strickland, Sioux Falls, SD (PC)  
10 James Williams, Montgomery, AL (CH)  
11 Ron Handlon, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
11 Paul Kinney, College Park, GA (CH)  
13 Rick Landon, Lexington, KY (PC)  
13 Scott Lee, Snellville, GA (CH)  
13 Frank Stillwell, Lexington, KY (PC)  
13 Robin Sullens, Dallas, TX (PC)

DECEMBER 14

## Blessing for Safety

*Lita Sample*

*Field Personnel in San Francisco Bay Area, California*



### Luke 2:1-6

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

I wrote this blessing based on my conversations with Afghan refugees. I can't mention their names because of risk, but one of these refugees has become a believer and has hopes for others to come to know Jesus, too. I wrote this from his perspective.

### **A Blessing from a Refugee to Those Coming to America**

My heart was heavy when I left my home country of Afghanistan to move to America.

I was hopeful that fleeing persecution into a free country would make me feel safe.

My family and I made this our home, and we learned the culture, the language and became part of community.

I found faith in Jesus, whom I realized I never knew. The church nurtured me as I grew in that faith.

We worked hard to become citizens and after we passed our test, we said the oath with pride.

Recently, we've seen others from our country who join us here out of necessity. They journey to our land because it offers protection and a new start.

They too left a familiar home and arrive with shock, overwhelmed.

But here, they begin their journey of trying to feel safe. However, today, their experience is different from mine.

These new refugees are filled with uncertainty as they are in a country that does not want them.

Where will they go if they must leave? What will they do? How will they survive yet another unfamiliar place?

My heart is heavy once again.

To them, I gently hand this blessing to be poured over them:

Where you are standing, in the dark place, filled with fear, you are not alone. I walk with you.

The uncertainty is always there no matter the circumstance, so with this, I pray for peace in the midst of this storm.

The longing to care for your family is one that I pray is strengthened in terrible times and that God will grant you wisdom.

When you feel frozen so that you don't want to leave your house, I pray for a caring person who will bring you food and friendship.

I pray that the persecution that seems to be waiting in the shadows will be vanquished in the light of justice.

The believers in Jesus who stand with you are many. I pray that they, along with myself, will move to help the growing community who feel lost will feel safe once again.

And in the midst of all of this, I pray that you will come to know Jesus, whom I know. Because He is the one who will provide peace in the middle of war, hope in the middle of desperation, warmth in the midst of the coldness of your situation and love when all seems lost.

Jesus is my continued hope. I feel Him more now that circumstances seem hopeless, and He shows His goodness even though the world seems to take all goodness away. My hope is in Him knowing that one day, I along with others will finally find the joy and pure freedom of heaven.

I hope this for you too. This crisis is not the end but a means to hope in God who will carry all of us through to the end.

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15 Anna Anderson, Emeritus (FP)  
15 James Close, Louisville, KY (CH)  
15 Katie Fletcher (S-Together for Hope)  
15 Sheree Jones, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
15 Derric Stinchcomb (S-CBF Global)  
16 Lee Ann Rathbun, Austin, TX (CH)  
16 Chelsea Turpen, Addison, TX (CH)  
16 Ina Winstead, Emeritus (FP)  
17 Ian Dyke, Greenville, SC (CH)  
17 Maria-Grace Khano, 2014, Belgium (FPC)  
17 Buddy Presley, North Augusta, SC (CH)

17 Ronald Wilson, Northport, AL (CH)  
18 Loris Adams, Indian Trail, NC (CH)  
18 Joel DeFehr, Oklahoma City, OK (CH)  
18 Elizabeth Nance-Coker (S-South Carolina)  
19 Anna-Grace Acker, 2005, Uganda (FPC)  
19 Bernard Morris, Chester, VA (CH)  
19 James Palmer, Tampa, FL (CH)  
20 Robert Brasier, Queen Creek, AZ (CH)  
20 Melissa L. Dowling, Liberty, MO (CH)  
20 Larry Glover-Wetherington, Durham, NC (PC)  
20 Alan Willard, Blacksburg, VA (PC)

DECEMBER 21

## Emmanuel, God with Us

*Cynthia Insko*

*Spiritual Director, LifePaths*



### Matthew 19:14

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

We may not like to think of ourselves as children. After all, if someone were to call me child-ish, I might assume they were saying I was selfish, immature, demanding. But being child-like, as Jesus suggests, is different. If I am child-like, I am open to awe, wonder, mystery and I am teachable. I am growing in my relationship with God, myself and my neighbors. I am humbly aware of my dependence on God to nurture, guide and provide. And I am growing in my identity and groundedness in love.

Each of us enters this world as a child—a child in whom God has placed God’s very own image, no exceptions! I wonder how remembering this might help us deepen our love for God and neighbor. To claim the name, “Child of God,” is to connect to other people as our siblings and to connect to God as our Source of Being. Consider, too, that God regards children as so sacred that Jesus himself entered this world as a child! Our Emmanuel, “God With Us,” was born as a crying, vulnerable, impressionable, dependent babe. And he grew to be a man who welcomed children with open arms and taught us to do the same.

As adults we may be cautious about embracing our name, “Child of God;” but Jesus was not. When he taught us how to pray by offering the Lord’s Prayer, he began by addressing God as “Abba” which in Aramaic is translated, “Daddy.” This child-like stance, Jesus taught, opens us to full participation in the Kingdom of God “on earth” as it is “in heaven”.

The next time you pray the Lord’s Prayer, I wonder if you might think of being child-like as a blessing. Perhaps this is the perfect stance from which to approach God with whole-hearted openness and to see one another as true siblings.

# The Lord's Prayer

from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones

Hello Daddy!

We want to know you and be close to you. Please show us how. Make everything in the world right again. And in our hearts, too.

Do what is best—just like you do in heaven, and please do it down here, too. Please give us everything we need today.

Forgive us for doing wrong, for hurting you. Forgive us just as we forgive other people when they hurt us.

Rescue us! We need you. We don't want to keep running away and hiding from you. Keep us safe from our enemies. You're strong, God.

You can do whatever you want. You are in charge. Now and forever and for always! We think you're great! Amen! Yes we do!

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21 Lynn Hutchinson, Emeritus (FP)  
21 Bethany McLemore, Roanoke, VA (PC)  
22 Michael Mills, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
22 Sarah Wofford, Mooresville, NC (CH)  
23 Frances Brown, Surfside Beach, SC (PC)  
23 Alisha Damron Seruyange (S-Alabama/Global)  
23 Robert Elkowitz, Cumming, GA (CH)  
23 Steven Ivy, Indianapolis, IN (CH)  
23 Hal Lee, Clinton, MS (CH)  
23 Linda Strange, Denton, TX (CH)  
24 Michael Carter, Dallas, TX (CH)

26 Freddy Hinson, Rocky River, OH (CH)  
26 Jim Morrison (S-Church Benefits Board)  
26 Haley Seanor, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
26 Scottie Stamper, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
26 Nicole Tota, Greenville, NC (CH)  
27 Larry Austin, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)  
27 Steve Clark, Emeritus (FP)  
27 Jonathan Madden, Cincinnati, OH (CH)  
27 Sean Roberds (S-Mid-Atlantic)  
27 Solon Smith, Louisville, KY (CH)

DECEMBER 28

## New Year's Blessings

*Keith Holmes*

*Emeritus Field Personnel in The Netherlands*



We wish you much more than a Happy New Year!

Many years ago, my brother Ted's family moved to Poland to work with another mission organization. Our family of four took an overnight train from the Netherlands to Krakow to join them for their first Christmas abroad. Ted and his wife Beverly introduced us to several Polish Christmas traditions, including the custom of giving good wishes to each other. On Christmas Eve, Ted took both my hands in his, looked me straight in the eye and spoke good wishes for me for the coming year.

This was much more than wishing someone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The wishes included my spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Then it was my turn to speak my wishes for him. Good health, closeness to God, success with work, safety while traveling, a cheerful spirit, wisdom in the future, continued joy and positive prospects for all our children.

This custom isn't limited to Christmas. Our Polish friends include extensive wishes in their birthday and Christmas cards. If we celebrate a birthday together, they will take the birthday person by both hands, look them straight in the eye and speak out their many wishes for that individual. These wishes came from the heart and carried the weight of a blessing.

Here are my wishes for you this New Year.

I wish you strength, knowing that the Creator of the stars and the sparrows sees you and cares for you.

I wish you courage, knowing that the light of Jesus Christ shines in and through you in the darkest nights and the brightest days.

I wish you joy, now and forever more.

# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## CBF Conversations Podcast

[www.cbf.net/podcast](http://www.cbf.net/podcast)

### Conversations Matter

CBF Conversations is the weekly podcast of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, bringing listeners nearly a decade of engaging interviews with authors, practitioners, innovators, academics and organizational leaders. More than just talk, these conversations serve as a catalyst for practical ministry and theological reflection. Listeners discover new resources, gain fresh perspectives and hear inspiring stories from diverse voices. Each episode invites engagement with God's renewing work in the world through the shared experiences and insights of those serving in varied contexts and callings.



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28 Claudia Forrest, Cordova, TN (CH)  
28 John Halbrook, Pound Ridge, NY (PC)  
28 Thomas Holbrook, Berea, KY (PC)  
29 Kimberly Miller, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
29 Art Wiggins, Jacksonville, NC (CH)  
30 Shay Crenshaw, Raleigh, NC (CH)  
30 Revonda Deal, Emeritus (FP)  
30 James Garrison, Arden, NC (CH)  
30 Kenneth Kelly, Black Mountain, NC (CH)  
30 Ramona Reynolds-Netto, Orlando, FL (CH)  
30 Lex Robertson, Oklahoma City, OK (CH)

31 David "Tod" Smith, Farmington, NM (CH)  
1 Sam Bandela, Emeritus (EP)  
1 Rebecca Brown, Elizabethtown, KY (CH)  
1 Al Dean, Durham, NC (CH)  
1 Varughese Jacob, Houston, TX (CH)  
1 Christina Pryor-Pittman, Lexington, SC (CH)  
2 Rick Bennett (S-Tennessee)  
2 Emi Brand, Orlando, FL (CH)  
2 Tammy Stocks, Emeritus (FP)  
3 Christopher Bowers, Powhatan, VA (PC)  
3 William McCann, Madisonville, KY (CH)



# Threshold Blessings

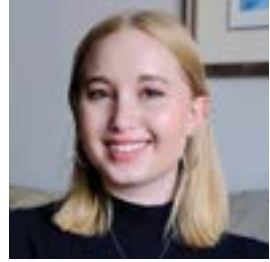
Exploring the  
terrain of the soul

**JANUARY 4**

## **A Blessing for the In-betweens**

**Caroline LeGrand**

*CBF Missions Communications Specialist*



### **Philippians 1:6**

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I've been thinking a lot about the unspoken grief that comes with life's in-betweens. The precipice between one thing and another is a difficult place in which to exist. There are all kinds of transitions—those you knew were coming, those you didn't expect, those you planned and those you wish never happened.

For many people I know, the past several years have been a tumultuous time—constant political and economic upheaval, a global pandemic that reshaped the course of their lives, the death of loved ones, babies born and families that grew or shrunk, relationships that began and ended, identities reconsidered, homes left by choice or by force and careers and livelihoods left by choice or by force. Personally, I've experienced more beginnings and endings in the past several years than I can count. And with this comes a peculiar, liminal grief that is hard to describe.

This blessing is dedicated to all those at a crossroads, whether mourning what they lost, looking hopefully to whatever is next or stuck somewhere in-between. But it is especially dedicated to my family, who have and continue to experience many transitions over the past several years.

### **A Blessing for the In-betweens**

Blessed are you who mourn life's transitions.

Blessed are you who yearn for the things that used to be.

Blessed are you who feel torn between relief and sorrow at a moment of leaving.

Blessed are you when the person you thought you'd become, the things you thought you'd do, are no longer possible.

Blessed are you who are waiting for closure.

Blessed are you when you feel neither here nor there, when you're not sure if you fit

in anywhere at all.

Blessed are you when you are too tired to embrace change and process what you've lost.

Blessed are you when you feel unequipped to start something new.

Blessed are you when the path is no longer clear, and you feel you've lost your way.

Blessed are you when you feel like the world is moving against you.

Blessed are you when life keeps rolling along, with people leaving or moving on or dying, but you're still here, wondering why. Why am I still here when so many others don't get to be? What is my purpose?

To all those experiencing life's in-betweens, know that the One who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Within the grief of these liminal spaces, God is there.

In the stillness of the in-between, neither here nor there, the One who has brought light in the darkness and joy in the morning whispers to you, saying:

The One who created you has not abandoned you.

You are not finished.

There is still work to be done.

There is still more beauty to behold,  
more joy and grief to experience,  
more love to give and receive.

You are still unfolding, ever-creating,  
ever-becoming the person

God made you to be.

You are not alone.

You are still here.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

4 Joshua Hickman, Crete, Greece (CH)  
4 Scott Hudgins (S-North Carolina)  
5 Richard Durham, Mount Pleasant, NC (CH)  
5 Charles Kirby, Hendersonville, NC (CH)  
5 Kevin Lynch, Spartanburg, SC (PC)  
5 Calvin McIver, Sacramento, CA (CH)  
5 Linda Serino, Memphis, TN (CH)  
6 Larry Hardin, Topeka, KS (CH)  
6 Santiago Reales, Winston Salem, NC (CH)  
7 Richard Catlett, Richmond, VA (CH)

8 Ellen Burnette, Emeritus (FP)  
8 Luis Caiza, Elizabethtown, KY (CH)  
8 Rachel Hill, Shelby, NC (CH)  
8 Ethan Lee, 2009, Macedonia (FPC)  
9 Bill Cayard, Emeritus (FP)  
9 Paul Hamilton, Lodge, SC (CH)  
9 Jeffrey Perkins, Westchester, OH (CH)  
10 Melody Harrell, Emeritus (FP)  
10 Jill Zimmer, Columbia, TN (CH)

**JANUARY 11**

## **Friendship Blessing**

***Mina Podgaiskay***

***Field Personnel in Krakow, Poland***



### **Proverbs 17:17 (AMP)**

A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.

### **Friendship Blessing**

Friendships do not know country boundaries, do not know distances.  
Even if distance separates us,  
Even if it hurts to think of the distance between us,  
There is always a place in my heart for you.  
In each memory of you, in each trip,  
Our friendship continues to bloom.  
I know that even if you are far, you are always there,  
When it is night, you are a lighthouse, a secure guide.  
With your prayers and support, my road opens up,  
In your friendship, I find beauty and peace.  
Thank you for your love.  
Thank you for being my compass and my lighthouse during the hard times.  
In each word, in each call, in each message,  
in each prayer, you plant seeds of hope.  
I am thankful, grateful and blessed.  
My soul sings with gratitude,  
and your friendship brings me peace.

“The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.” — Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

After serving in Ukraine for 23 years, the war has forced us to move to Kraków, Poland. We have gone through a tumultuous time with grief, loss, pain, death and uncertainty. However, the friendships of our CBF churches, friends and family have made this transition bearable. We have hope that the Lord will continue to use us to minister to Ukrainians and Ukrainian refugees. He has already opened doors to start ministering to some Ukrainian foster families in Poland and doing premarital counseling to a Polish-Bolivian couple from our church. We feel your friendship. We feel blessed! We experience God's protection. We are blessed!

## Psalm 121

"I look up to the mountains—  
does my help come from there?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth!  
He will not let you stumble;  
the one who watches over you will not slumber.  
Indeed, he who watches over Israel  
never slumbers or sleeps.  
The Lord himself watches over you!  
The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.  
The sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon at night.  
The Lord keeps you from all harm  
and watches over your life.  
The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go,  
both now and forever.  
Amen!"

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

11 Michael Gerace, Baker City, OR (CH)  
11 Timothy Morgan, Pensacola, FL (CH)  
11 Ed Waldrop, Augusta, GA (CH)  
12 Neil Cochran, Greenville, SC (CH)  
12 Phillip C. Moody, Lexington, KY (CH)  
12 Scott Smallwood, Englewood, FL (CH)  
13 Katie Dean, Atlanta, GA (CH)  
13 Dianne McNary, Little Rock, AR (S-CBF Global)  
14 Thomas Cantwell, Paducah, KY (CH)

15 Ian Bell, Louisville, KY (CH)  
15 Keith Ethridge, Belton, TX (CH-Ret.)  
15 John Foxworth, El Paso, TX (CH-Ret.)  
15 Janie Powell, Lexington, KY (CH)  
16 David Hormenoo, Durham, NC (CH)  
16 Grace Sykes, Lincolnton, NC (CH)  
17 Matthew Hanzelka, Round Rock, TX (CH)  
17 Aaron Norman, 2005, Spain (FPC)  
17 Glenn Norris, Sherwood, AR (CH)

**JANUARY 18**

## **For Courage**

**Melissa Roysdon**

**Pastor, Providence Baptist Church,  
Cookeville, Tennessee**



### **Isaiah 41:6**

Each one helps the other, saying to one another, “Take courage!”

On December 26, 2023, everything in my world changed. That night I answered the phone, believing it was my husband, but I heard this strange voice saying, “Melissa this is...and I have Tony’s phone. I think he may have had a stroke...” I was only able to process some of what I was hearing, but at some point, I realized I would be meeting a helicopter at Vanderbilt Hospital and that I had heard my husband in the background telling an EMT what his name was.

The next few days were filled with prayers of gratitude and pleas for wisdom and healing. He had suffered damage, but nothing like I had feared. We were optimistic that with therapy and time he would recover. When we came home, I was so filled with joy that sometimes he thought I didn’t notice how much he was struggling with tasks that were once simple. He was grateful, but not ready to be joyful. During this time of struggle, I reached for my copy of John O’Donohue’s book of blessings. Each night I would read, “For Courage” as we settled into bed and before each of us offered our own prayers for courage, wisdom and healing.

While there were days when the strange new reality seemed overwhelming, through it all we found strength together. Today, he still struggles with not being the same, but we both know how blessed we have been and that we are stronger for having gone through this together, trusting God to hold us when holding on was all we could do.

## **For Courage**

By John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

When the light around you lessens  
And your thoughts darken until  
Your body feels fear turn  
Cold as a stone inside,

When you find yourself bereft  
Of any belief in yourself  
And all you unknowingly  
Leaned on has fallen,

When one voice commands  
Your whole heart,  
And it is raven dark,

Steady yourself and see  
That it is your own thinking  
That darkens your world.

Search and you will find  
A diamond-thought of light,

Know that you are not alone,  
And that this darkness has purpose;  
Gradually it will school your eyes,  
To find the one gift your life requires  
Hidden within this night-corner.

Invoke the learning  
Of every suffering  
You have suffered.

Close your eyes.  
Gather all the kindling  
About your heart  
To create one spark  
That is all you need  
To nourish the flame  
That will cleanse the dark  
Of its weight of festered fear.

A new confidence will come alive  
To urge you towards higher ground  
Where your imagination  
will learn to engage difficulty  
As its most rewarding threshold!

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

18 William Beaver, Augusta, GA (CH)  
18 Jeanell Cox, Cary, NC (CH)  
18 Justin Nelson, Mount Airy, NC (CH)  
19 Kaelah-Joy Acker, 2008, Uganda (FPC)  
19 Kelly Adams (S-CBF Global)  
19 Jackie Ward, Goshen, KY (CH)  
19 Lyndsay Williams, Chesterfield, MO (CH)  
20 Marshall Gupton, Smyrna, TN (CH)  
20 Kevin Morgan, Pisgah Forest, NC (CH)

20 Paul Tolbert, Camp Atterbury, IN (CH)  
21 George Francis, Tampa, FL (CH)  
22 Jim Hylton (S-North Carolina)  
22 Bruce Moore, Barrington, IL (CH)  
23 Richard Atkinson, Bastrop, TX (CH)  
23 Deborah Fortune, Columbia, SC (CH)  
23 Brent Raitz, Cleveland, OH (CH)  
23 Trevor Wilson, Malmstrom, MT (CH)  
24 Stephen Reeves (S-Fellowship Southwest)

**JANUARY 25**

## **For All Contending with Cancer**



***Isaac M.T. Mwase***

***Chair, CBF Global Missions Council (2024-25); Associate  
Pastor, University Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland***

Yesterday I said hello to a friend from seminary days. He was calling to see how I was doing. In March of 2025, the year of my 65th birthday, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My friend proceeded to share with me the sad and terrifying news that he also had joined the throng dealing with some kind of cancer. He is grappling with breast cancer. This is also the cancer that led to the death of his first wife and left him a widower to raise three beautiful children by himself for several years, until meeting and marrying his current, devastated spouse. He works as a hospital chaplain. I prayed with him just as he had prayed with me when I informed him of my own cancer diagnosis in March.

We compared notes about our treatments. I am undergoing hormone therapy and preparing to undergo radiation treatment sometime during the summer of 2025. My prostate cancer was characterized by a Gleason score of nine with metastasis to the lymph nodes; that of former President Joe Biden metastasized to the bones. My friend is going to have surgery June 2025 followed by radiation treatment.

It is ironic that I moved to Maryland from Alabama to become a Cancer Prevention Fellow with the National Cancer Institute. My main cancers of interest you ask? Prostate cancer, because it has a high incidence among Black people and cancers of the brain because of the way these cancers affect our sense of selfhood.

Cancer diagnoses no longer spell immediate death. However, all affected must confront our mortality. The why me question is best answered by a hymn I implore my family to include in my memorial service when I depart from here to the heavenly realm, *When Morning Comes*.

## **When Morning Comes**

1 Trials dark on ev'ry hand,  
and we cannot understand  
All the ways that God would lead us  
to that blessed Promised Land;  
But He'll guide us with His eye,  
and we'll follow till we die;  
We will understand it better by and by.

Chorus:

By and by, when the morning comes,  
When the saints of God are gathered home,  
We will tell the story how we've overcome;  
We will understand it better by and by.

2 Oft our cherished plans have failed,  
disappointments have prevailed,  
And we've wandered in the darkness,  
heavyhearted and alone;  
But we're trusting in the Lord,  
and according to His Word,  
We will understand it better by and by. [Chorus]

3 Temptations, hidden snares  
often take us unawares,  
And our hearts are made to bleed  
for some thoughtless word or deed,  
And we wonder why the test  
when we try to do our best,  
But we'll understand it better by and by. [Chorus]

*Source: Baptist Hymnal 2008 #615*

If cancer is a test, then all affected can benefit from a blessing.

## **Blessing for a Cancer Diagnosis**

At the time of diagnosis,  
may our response be infused with serenity.

May we find a care team  
equal to the cancer.

May family and friends  
produce more solace than alarm.

May we be granted a passing grade  
in dealing with the mixed emotions  
that attend us:  
anger,  
discouragement,  
hopelessness,  
anxiety.

As we undergo treatment,  
grant that our energy levels  
are equal  
to our past commitments.

And if commitments have to change,  
let joy be found  
in new activities.  
Amen!

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S = CBF Staff Member

25 Mich, Emeritus (FP)  
25 Chris Nagel, Houston, TX (CH)  
26 Tina Hall, Manassas, VA (CH)  
27 Darrell Bare, Charleston, SC (CH)  
27 Stacey Cruze, Georgetown KY (PC)  
27 Ben Sandford, Alexandria, VA (CH)  
28 Chuck Ahlemann, Des Moines, IA (CH)  
28 Marcia Henry-Day, Griffin, GA (CH)  
29 Christopher Bowers, Powhatan, VA (CH)  
29 Zachary Brand, Orlando, FL (CH)

29 Glen Foster (S-West)  
29 Darryl Jefferson, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
29 Colton Sims, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
30 Matthew Benorden, Lawrence, KS (CH)  
30 Hal Ritter, Waco, TX (PC)  
30 Nathan Rogers, Anchorage, AK (CH)  
31 Rebecca Adrian, Irving, TX (CH)  
31 John Manuel, Fort Hood, TX (CH)  
31 Paul Smith, San Diego, CA (CH)

**FEBRUARY 1**

## **Blessing Our Children**

***Ryan Wilson***

***Senior Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church,  
Seneca, South Carolina***



When I think about blessings, the story of Jacob stealing his father’s blessing from his brother Esau comes to mind. And what has always grabbed me about this story is when Esau comes to his father Isaac and cries out, “Bless me—me too, my father!” It’s excruciating and painful! Esau feels shunned, insulted and outcast! To be honest, I’ve never quite understood why Isaac couldn’t offer another blessing to another child.

What I do know is that children crave the blessing of their parents. I see it over and over in the preschool and children’s ministry at our church. I’ve also seen it in coaching children and youth sports. Children and youth look over and crave encouragement and compliments from their parents, no matter their abilities. Children want and need to be blessed by their parents. When parents bless their children, kids sense the love of their parents and know that they belong and matter to their parents. Self-esteem and confidence grow in the child who is blessed. The emotional support that a child receives from the blessing cannot be understated.

We often think of Jesus blessing children and even scolding his disciples when they were hindering the children from coming to Him. What this tells us is that Jesus knows the importance of blessings. Parents often look to scripture for help in knowing the words to share in blessing their children.

My wife, Kay, and I are empty nesters this year. We hope we have blessed our three children (young adults) so that they can thrive in their new settings. We want them to be able to be faithful, contributing members of whatever community in which they find themselves.

As I think of Scriptural blessings I want my children to hear, I think of these:

- When they are down in life, I hope they hear Rom. 15:13: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- When they are struggling with demons within them, I pray they hear these words of God's protection in Phil. 4:7: And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
- When they are anxious or doubting, may they hear Josh. 1:9: Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.
- And finally, when they are striving to be loving toward others as Christ has loved them, I hope they hear Phil. 1:9-11: And this is my prayer: That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-to the glory and praise of God.

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S = CBF Staff Member

1 Susan Collins, Stone Mountain, GA (CH)  
1 Brad Jackson, Springfield, OH (CH)  
1 Tammy Snyder (S-Florida/Caribbean Islands)  
2 Joe Alverson, Nicholasville, KY (CH)  
2 Lauren Lamb (S-CBF Global)  
2 Verónica Martínez-Gallegos, Dallas, TX (CH)  
2 Terry Tatro, Louisville, KY (CH)  
3 Richard Dayringer, Grove, OK (PC)  
3 Rachel Erickson, Chattanooga, TN (CH)  
3 Jason Matlack, Columbus, OH (CH)

3 Kathie Thomas, Emeritus (FP)  
4 Delores Kay Smith, Hickory, NC (CH)  
5 Andrew Bowles, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
5 Brian Cleveland, New Orleans, LA (CH)  
5 Ruben Ortiz (S-CBF Global)  
5 Joanna Tarr, Kansas City, MO (CH)  
7 Xiomara Reboyras (S-Florida/Caribbean Islands)  
7 Aundrea Shepherd, Leicester, NC (CH)

**FEBRUARY 8**

## **Light and Shadow**

***Tina Boyles Bailey***

***Field Personnel in Graz, Austria***



“There are only two major paths by which the human soul comes to God: the path of great love, and the one of great suffering.”

Richard Rohr, *Life Coming to a Focus*

### **1. Mercy Flows**

Mercy flows through our heart  
and out of our heart,  
ever changing  
how we interact  
with our inner self and others.

As a human heart  
carries the energy of life,  
the blood flows in and out of the heart.  
When the flow is blocked  
the entire body and life is at risk.

Our spiritual health  
is connected  
to the flow of mercy  
into our spiritual heart,  
Stay open dear heart.

Allow mercy to be received,  
embrace it  
and know how much you are loved  
and can love,  
flowing freely, receiving and giving mercy  
from the well spring of the divine heart.

When I think of all the ways we close our hearts in an effort to self-protect, I was moved by the connection to a soft open heart that is needed to stay healthy. I wrote

this poem as I was reflecting on the connection between the flow of mercy and openness. When life gets hard, it is counterintuitive to lean into mercy and softness, but I believe it is what is needed. When we block and close off our hearts, we begin to die inside. My prayer and blessing is that we lean into mercy and allow love to flow through our hearts.

## **2. Light and shadow**

Lights and shadows  
dance in harmony,  
giving balance and shape  
to all of who I am.

Both in the secret spaces where hurt lives,  
in the high places where joy shines.

The harmony and acceptance  
of the invitation,  
to dance in the in-between spaces,  
brings healing and growth.

As lights hold hands  
ever so gently with shadows,  
we can safely explore  
the hidden spaces  
Dance  
Dance  
Dance!

May God's blessings lead you on to wholeness.

As an artist, I often reflect on the importance of shadows and light. Without both, there is no depth. The shadows build form and definition, and the light makes the image come to life. In our lives we are not only formed by the highs, but also by the hard times, the valleys. In fact, it is when we walk through the harder times in life that we find out who we are or who we hope to become. Father Richard Rohr says, "We move on to the second stage of life, either through great love or great suffering... but usually both." This I can say has been true for me.

# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

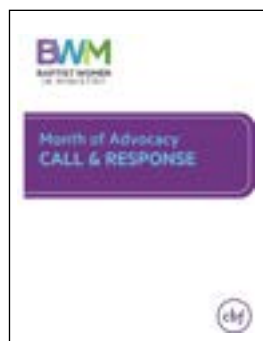
## BWIM Month of Advocacy Toolkit

[www.cbf.net/congregational-ministries/women-in-ministry](http://www.cbf.net/congregational-ministries/women-in-ministry)

### Tools for Advocating for Women in Ministry

This set of resources from Baptist Women in Ministry and CBF is designed for congregations to use during BWIM's annual Month of Advocacy in March.

Using videos, curriculum, worship resources and more, churches can engage all ages in learning about and encouraging women in every aspect of leadership and ministry.



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8 John Boyles, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
8 Biju Chacko, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
8 Larry Johnson, Midlothian, VA (CH)  
9 Shaquisha (Kikki) Barnes, Durham, NC (CH)  
9 Nathan Cooper, Greenville, SC (CH)  
9 Jo Kirkendall, Biloxi, MS (CH)  
9 Elizabeth Milazzotto, Louisville, KY (PC)  
9 Willie Smith, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)  
10 Bradley Chahoy, Colorado Springs, CO (CH)  
10 James Rentz, Spartanburg, SC (PC)  
10 Cynthia Thomas, Houston, TX (CH)

11 Lauralee Estes, Northport, AL (PC)  
11 Katee Harris, Rose Hill, NC (CH)  
11 Ashley Mangrum, Boston, MA (CH)  
11 Will Runyon, La Crosse, WI (CH)  
12 James (Terry) Raines, Richmond, VA (CH)  
13 David Fox, Roanoke, VA (CH)  
13 Dianne Swaim, North Little Rock, AR (CH)  
14 Roger Bolton, Conyers, GA (PC)  
14 Charla Littell, Burlington, NC (CH)  
14 Grace Martino-Suprice (S-CBF Global)

**FEBRUARY 15**

## **Marked by Favor**

***Dihanne Moore***

***CBF Executive Assistant and Project Specialist***



In this season where loss and transition seem to touch almost every part of my life, I'm reminded how powerful it is when someone takes the time to speak the favor of God over another person. Years ago, someone did that for me. They spoke a blessing from Deuteronomy 33, Moses' words over Naphtali and Asher. Naphtali was said to be "abounding in the favor of the Lord and full of His blessing." Asher was called "most blessed among sons," one whose strength would match his days. I didn't fully grasp the weight of those words at the time, but they landed in me. And they stayed.

Over the years, I've pulled these words back out during moments when I needed to remember who I was and who God has always been. These blessings have carried me through ministry, loss and my Christian journey. And now, in another season of waiting, adjusting and rebuilding, I return to it again. I hold it close—not as a magic formula, but as a reminder of God's presence when I feel uncertain and tired. Sometimes, all I have is the memory of what was spoken over me and the quiet faith that it still matters.

Favor doesn't always look like open doors or easy days. Sometimes it looks like grace for just enough. Sometimes it's peace that shows up when nothing else makes sense. Sometimes it's a blessing someone once spoke over you that resurfaces just in time. This is one of those times. And maybe you're in one of those seasons too.

### **A Blessing**

May you be surrounded by the favor of God,  
the kind that stays with you  
when the road stretches longer than expected.

May you be full of blessing,  
even when life feels uncertain  
and your next steps aren't yet clear.

May peace be your portion,

and may strength meet you each day,  
right where you are.

May your life carry the kind of oil  
that doesn't run out  
when the pressure is high.

And may you know, deep down,  
that God has not forgotten you.  
You are still held.

Still chosen.  
Still loved.  
Still blessed.

May the favor of Naphtali  
and the blessings of Asher  
overtake you in this season.

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15 Michon McCorkle, Carmel, IN (PC)  
16 Kanisha Billingsley, Tampa, FL (CH)  
16 Rebecca Hewitt-Newson, Glendale, CA (CH)  
16 Brad Mitchell, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
16 Carter Sapp, Houston, TX (CH)  
17 Annie Laura Walker, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
18 Edward Fleming, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
18 George Nytes, Huntsville, AL (CH)  
18 Jean Prueett, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
18 T Thomas, Emeritus (FP)

19 Leah Ryan, New Castle, VA (CH)  
20 Amanda Ducksworth, Salt Lake City, UT (CH)  
20 Younsoo Park, Fort Drum, NY (CH)  
21 Rebecca Church, Louisville, KY (CH)  
21 Cindy Adair Inman, Spartanburg, SC (CH)  
21 Linda McComb, Clinton, MS (CH)  
21 Stephanie Patterson, New Castle, NC (CH)  
21 Ellen Sechrest (S-CBF Global)  
21 Jeffery Thompson, Gainesville, GA (CH)



# Lenten Blessings

Blessings for the season  
of spiritual struggle

**FEBRUARY 22**

## **Blessed by Discomfort**

***Holly Hatton***

*Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church,  
Memphis, Tennessee*



### **Matthew 5:3**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Have you ever been in a situation so uncomfortable that you had to look away? Maybe the following scenarios sound familiar. At a piano recital, when a student plays the wrong note and then struggles to recover, do you feel the need to bury your face in the recital program? At the grocery store, when a kid is throwing a fit and their parent is clearly at the end of their rope, do you suddenly become very interested in the label of the cereal box you're holding? In your car, at a stoplight, with a person next to you on the median asking for assistance, does tuning the car radio become your number one priority?

Most of us are not comfortable bearing witness to someone else's discomfort. What lengths will you go to in order to avoid unpleasantness and confrontation? For me, the answer is GREAT lengths! Sometimes we turn away from uncomfortable situations in order to save others from embarrassment or to save ourselves from embarrassment. Sometimes, we turn away out of pure denial—if we don't see our neighbor's plight, then we don't have to share in it.

If you are like me, you do your best to avoid anything that might disrupt your peace. But here's the thing: Jesus is disruptive. He directs our gaze toward what matters and draws us close to it. When we lean into our own unease and share in the discomfort of others, we open our hearts to the suffering in the world and become more kind and loving people.

It takes determination, presence and practice to see discomfort as a blessing, but this is how we come close to Jesus. When the student at the recital plays a wrong note, hold your head up and project encouragement out of your eyeballs toward them. When the parent at the store is struggling with a fussy kid, throw them a rope and

say, "Man, I've had those days too!" When you've got nothing to give to the person in the median, look them in the eye and give them a smile and a nod. Jesus blessed the poor in spirit. May God bless us all with discomfort, for it is in this that we will find the kingdom of heaven.

## A Blessing for Discomfort

Lord, help us to see discomfort as a blessing.

May our unease make us more aware of the suffering of others.

Direct our gaze that we may see the plight of our neighbors.

May our discomfort shake us out of our complacency and into acts of love and kindness. Amen.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

22 Stephanie McLeskey, Mars Hill, NC (CH)  
23 Michelle Robinson, Columbia, SC (CH)  
24 Edwin Badillo, Levittown, Puerto Rico (CH)  
24 Danny Tomlinson, Belton, TX (CH)  
25 Lindell Anderson, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
25 Rick Foster, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
26 Christa Chappelle, High Point, NC (CH)

26 Rodney Craggs, Louisville, KY (CH)  
26 Sheryl Johnson, Richmond, VA (CH)  
26 Louise Mason, Richmond, VA (CH)  
26 Kimberly Reid, Kaneohe, HI (CH)  
27 Linda Moore, Greenville, NC (CH)  
28 Amanda Adams, Jeffersonville, IN (CH)

**MARCH 1**

## **A Blessing for Change**

***Kelly Adams***

***CBF Director of Clergy Support  
Ecosystem***



You are invited to read the following blessing in the style of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina is a practice of meditative reading in which a passage is read two to three times to listen for how God is speaking through it. As you read this blessing a few times, listen “with the ear of your heart” and see if you can identify a word or phrase that the Holy Spirit points out to you today. You may take this word or phrase to God in prayer, then close your time with a final reading of the blessing.

### **A Blessing for When You Know You Need to Change (but Don’t Want to)**

The world is changing every day, every hour, every minute  
Some changes we embrace—  
We learn the new software at work  
We make new friends  
We trade in the old car for a new one

Some changes we resist  
Because they ask too much of us  
We don’t want to change that  
Because it means something in us might have to change, too,  
We acknowledge that we are holding on too tightly  
But change is hard  
And changing our mind, our views, our values, our practices  
Comes with too many questions  
And too much judgment

Blessed are you when you know you need to change  
You have done the hard work of noticing the people and world around you  
You are responding to an inner stirring  
Perhaps of the Holy Spirit?  
Toward newness  
May this stirring give you clarity and tenacity

To take the next step  
And make the change(s) you acknowledge you need

God who knows our hearts,  
Let the work of making all things new begin in us  
And make us faithful to embrace renewal in ourselves  
So that we can keep noticing the newness in the world  
Which points to where we can join you at work  
Serving and loving our neighbors

Gift us with companions who listen with empathy  
And affirm these changes without judgment  
And do not leave us content  
But keep us ever attuned to the world and to the Holy Spirit  
So that maybe next time, we will be less resistant  
And more ready to embrace the ways you are calling us  
To be a more faithful reflection of your love to our world.  
Amen.

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1 Brent Peery, Conroe, TX (CH)  
1 Chris Scales, Lubbock, TX (CH)  
1 Gregory Wolfe, Owensboro, KY (CH)  
2 Amy Cook (S-North Carolina)  
2 Faith Fitzgerald, Richmond, VA (CH)  
2 Steve Oswalt, Urbana, IL (CH)  
2 Michael Patterson, Columbus, GA (CH)  
2 Glenn Williams, Louisville, KY (PC)  
3 David Bosley, Vienna, VA (CH)  
4 Kristin Akins, Maitland, FL (CH)

4 Labrey Burris, Gastonia, NC (CH)  
4 Ed Lemmond, Athens, TN (CH)  
4 Jane Martin, Emeritus (FP)  
5 Buddy Corbin, Asheville, NC (CH)  
5 Donnie Marlar, Rochester, NY (CH)  
6 Ronnie Adams, Emeritus (FP)  
6 Jarrod Foerster, Fort Still, OK (CH)  
7 Laura Foushee, Japan (FP)  
7 Wade Rowatt, Louisville, KY (PC)

**MARCH 8**

## **Blessing in the Midst of Darkness**

***Eddie Aldape***

***Field Personnel in Almeria, Spain***



God has a way of turning the worst days in our ministry lives into the greatest blessings. It is like turning ordinary water into the best wine.

While serving in India, after the long process of renewing our residential permits, we were told that we needed to get new visas. We had business visas at the time, but the new requirement had come into effect, and we could not meet it. The idea was to go to Thailand for a week or so, apply for some other type of visa and return to the ministry we loved. We were also told we could return once we had new visas.

We packed a small suitcase and headed to Bangkok. As we were going through immigration, we were asked to step aside. Our passports were stamped and written across the stamp, in red ink it said, “UNDESIRABLE.” Our hearts sank and we could not stop crying. It was as if we had lost a loved one. We sat there asking God if we had done something wrong.

After applying three times for new visas and being declined, it was clear that our time in India was over. They were not going to let us return. Right in the midst of our despair, rays of sunshine started coming through our dark gloom. The leaders we had trained were finally taking up their leadership posts and God started doing God’s thing. As long as we were there, they depended on us to lead. Our goal had always been to work ourselves out of a job and that is just what had happened.

We could not see it at the time, but that is what we had been praying for. Being as stubborn as I am, God had to get us out of there one way or another. The process hurt, but the results have been glorious. Genesis 50:20 states: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

# A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark

By Jan Richardson in *Circle of Grace*

Go slow  
if you can.  
Slower.  
More slowly still.  
Friendly dark  
or fearsome,  
this is no place  
to break your neck  
by rushing,  
by running,  
by crashing into  
what you cannot see.  
Then again,  
it is true:  
different darks  
have different tasks,  
and if you  
have arrived here unawares,  
if you have come  
in peril  
or in pain,  
this might be no place  
you should dawdle.  
I do not know  
what these shadows  
ask of you,  
what they might hold  
that means you good  
or ill.  
It is not for me  
to reckon  
whether you should linger  
or you should leave.  
But this is what  
I can ask for you:  
That in the darkness  
there be a blessing.  
That in the shadows  
there be a welcome.

That in the night  
you be encompassed  
by the Love that knows  
your name.

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8 Marian Boyer, Florence, KY (CH)  
8 Susan Kroeker, Columbus, OH (CH)  
9 Stuart Collier, Vestavia, AL (CH)  
9 Michelle Norman, Spain (FP)  
10 Dean Akers, Washington, DC (CH)  
10 Cindy Bishop, Piedmont, SC (CH)

11 Julia Flores, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
11 Lisa Nisbet, Louisville, KY (PC)  
11 Rebekah Ramsey, Concord, NC (CH)  
12 Leah Leath, Concord, NC (CH)  
12 Robert Stanley, Atlanta, GA (CH)

**MARCH 15**

## **A Litany of Spiritual Defiance**

**Mike**

*Field Personnel in Waco, Texas*



Although we live in a city, we are often reminded that the land beneath us was once a tropical rainforest. This was especially clear when a landscaper informed us he had found three cobras in our yard. The blood of my Irish ancestors stirred within me, reminding me of the legend of St. Patrick driving all the snakes out of Ireland. Clearly, Saint Patrick never made his way to our island in Indonesia.

Many of us have heard a portion of St. Patrick's prayer: Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me. I had heard those lines many times before, but only recently discovered the full prayer. Even in its shortened form, there is a sense of completeness, a prayer for Christ to fill and surround us, to be part of every action and to be present in all our interactions.

In its longer form, however, the Prayer of St. Patrick takes on the weight and rhythm of a creed, a profession of faith wrapped in prayer. It is a litany of trust and spiritual defiance, calling on the Triune God and the communion of saints, angels and creation itself to stand as a shield against evil.

While the legend of Patrick driving out the snakes may be just that, a legend, the invocation of his words still has power. This prayer can drive out the metaphorical serpents that seek to strangle and ensnare us, keeping us from what God would have us do. May you find comfort in this blessing and inspiration for your own prayers. And may the world see and hear Christ in us.

### **Prayer of St. Patrick**

I arise today  
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
of the Creator of creation.

I arise today

Through the strength of Christ's birth with His baptism,  
Through the strength of His crucifixion with His burial,  
Through the strength of His resurrection with His ascension,  
Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of doom.

I arise today

Through the strength of the love of cherubim,  
In the obedience of angels,  
In the service of archangels,  
In the hope of resurrection to meet with reward,  
In the prayers of patriarchs,  
In the predictions of prophets,  
In the preaching of apostles,  
In the faith of confessors,  
In the innocence of holy virgins,  
In the deeds of righteous men.

I arise today, through

The strength of heaven,  
The light of the sun,  
The radiance of the moon,  
The splendor of fire,  
The speed of lightning,  
The swiftness of wind,  
The depth of the sea,  
The stability of the earth,  
The firmness of rock.

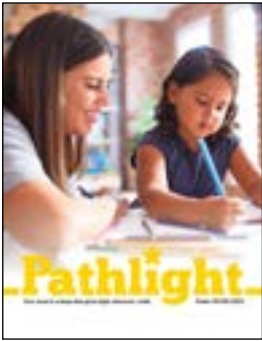
I arise today, through

God's strength to pilot me,  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's host to save me  
From snares of devils,  
From temptation of vices,  
From everyone who shall wish me ill,  
afar and near.

I summon today  
All these powers between me and those evils,  
Against every cruel and merciless power  
that may oppose my body and soul,  
Against incantations of false prophets,  
Against black laws of pagandom,  
Against false laws of heretics,  
Against craft of idolatry,  
Against spells of witches and smiths and wizards,  
Against every knowledge that corrupts man's body and soul;  
Christ to shield me today  
Against poison, against burning,  
Against drowning, against wounding,  
So that there may come to me an abundance of reward.

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right,  
Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today  
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
of the Creator of creation



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Pathlight

[www.cbf.net/pathlight](http://www.cbf.net/pathlight)

### Curriculum for Children to Explore the Good News of Jesus

Pathlight is a weekly curriculum for churches of all sizes and situations with inspiring content, engaging activities and timeless lessons.

Each free Pathlight download offers an easy-preparation teaching guide with a story, discussion questions, learning activities and a take-home sheet for students. Teacher guides can be adapted for use in Sunday school, missions classes or other small group settings. Each one-page student handout is designed for use as a take-home sheet or worship activity handout.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

15 Carita Brown, Catonsville, MD (CH)  
15 Mary VanRheenen, Emeritus (FP)  
17 Byron Bell, Atlanta, GA (GA)  
17 Mary Gessner, Madison, AL (PC)  
17 Andrew Hoyle, Alexandria, VA (CH)  
18 Jennifer Hawks (S-CBF Global)  
18 Dodie Huff-Fletcher, Louisville, KY (PC)  
18 Gabriel Pech, Vecenza, Italy (CH)  
18 Gregory Qualls, Mooresboro, NC (CH)  
18 Beth Riddick, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)  
18 David Robinson, Newport News, VA (PC)  
19 Jennifer Bordenet, Orlando, FL (CH)

19 Bob Fox (S-Kentucky)  
19 Angel Lee, Durham, NC (CH)  
19 Kim Schmitt, Fayetteville, GA (CH)  
20 Anna Allred, Asheboro, NC (CH)  
20 Cynthia Corey, Brunswick, GA (CH)  
20 Ada Foushee, 2019, Japan (FPC)  
20 William Hemphill, Stone Mountain, GA (CH)  
21 Walter Jackson, Louisville, KY (PC)  
21 Alan Melton, Waynesboro, VA (PC)  
21 Michael Strickland, Falls Church, VA (CH)  
21 Aaron Weaver (S-CBF Global)

**MARCH 22**

## **Troubled Times**

***Karen Alford***

***Field Personnel in Togo, West Africa***



In his book, *The Tears of Things*, Richard Rohr says that the opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty. May we live boldly in the freedom of not needing to be certain, but/and strong in our faith.

### **A Blessing for Troubled Times**

by Karen (with edits from Karen's inner cynic/critic/worrier)

May the God of justice walk beside us,  
Guide us  
(but first teach us how to follow...?)  
as we labor to mend what is broken,  
to speak truth in the face of judgment and silence,  
(And not judge. And not keep silent!)  
(...even if we are judging),  
and to love boldly in an increasingly exhausted world,  
exhausting world.

May Christ, who showed us the power of compassion,  
(Show us again, please, it didn't stick that time)  
fill our hearts with courage when fear surrounds,  
fear abounds  
(Does any but the privileged NOT feel fear right now?)  
and grant us peace that passes understanding  
even as we carry the burdens of the world.  
(Even when we are really really tired, oh God...especially then)

May the Spirit stir within us  
like wind through dry leaves,  
dry bones, dry souls—  
watering our hope, watering our imaginations,  
growing and greening in us new visions,  
(it's too dark to see...New visions?)

Enliven our hands for holy work  
Serving, giving, receiving  
Enliven our hearts for holy work  
Loving, praising, grieving  
(or/and/also, help us get out of bed)

Take heart: you are not alone.  
Holy Spirit, come...  
(Waiting...Holy Spirit...?)

The arc of love is long, and we are part of its bending,  
mending, wending  
Be gentle with yourself, fierce for others,  
and faithful in the small, quiet acts of resistance and care of others,  
care of self  
(Have I been faithful in practicing self-care?)

Go forth in grace, held and upheld by the Divine  
who still moves, still speaks, still heals.  
Hallelujah!  
(Hallelujah!)  
Amen. (Amen). Amen. (Amen)!

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23 J. Claude Huguley, Nashville, TN (CH)  
24 Gina Biddle, Dallas, TX (CH)  
24 Michael Gross, Durham, NC (CH)  
24 Michael Liga, Rochester, MN (CH)  
24 Emory (Chip) Reeves, Martinez, GA (CH)  
24 Mark Spain, Canyon Lake, TX (CH)  
24 Todd Walter, Inman, SC (CH)  
25 Jade Acker, Uganda (FP)

25 Gary Nistler, Evans, GA (CH-Ret.)  
26 Tyler Conway, Waco, TX (CH)  
27 Ken Chapman, Jefferson City, MO (CH)  
27 David Gladson, Pendleton, SC (CH)  
27 Amy Karriker, Great Falls, MT (CH)  
28 Lynda Schupp, Corinth, TX (CH)  
28 Leah Tripp (S-CBF Global)

**MARCH 29**

## **Passing the Peace**

**Laura Foushee**

*Field Personnel in Kanazawa, Japan*



### **John 15:27**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The words of Jesus in John 15:27 have always been moving to me. Among the last words to his disciples as he prepared for the cross were to pray for them and bless them with his peace that would be more than anything the world could give them. The disciples are blessed with a peace that would carry them forward through the coming dark and unknown days.

Some churches follow the tradition of “passing the peace” in their worship services. When we speak the words “the peace of Christ be with you” and then “and also with you,” we are passing on the peace that Christ bestowed on his dearest friends in his last days. It is not a light gesture to do so; it is a part of the ministry of the Church to be holy spaces where Christ’s peace is spoken into the lives of those who gather; a balm for all those who may be troubled or afraid.

Every Sunday as internationals from our city gather for worship, we end our services with a time to share prayer requests. Not a Sunday goes by that we do not pray for peace over someone—one who is new to our city and experiencing isolation; one who is living far away from a family member with serious medical issues; one who is struggling with how to make a life in Japan and discerning whether they need to leave difficult working conditions. Our gathering becomes a place to share and receive the peace of Christ with one another as a blessing to go back into the world.

The disciples were certainly still troubled and afraid in the days surrounding Jesus’ death, but the peace inevitably quieted their hearts for what would come next. Out of the peace came strength, courage and a renewed spirit for carrying on the mission of Jesus. So it is with us, and with those among whom we serve, who no doubt have days of trouble and fear. This peace of Christ that we share and bless among one another will inevitably calm our hearts, preparing us for what comes next.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Sacred Spaces, Innovative Places

[www.cbf.net/sacred-spaces](http://www.cbf.net/sacred-spaces)

### Sparking New Ministry Ideas

Reimagine your church's buildings as assets, not burdens. This 2-volume series shares inspiring case studies of congregations creatively repurposing their property—from solar farms to nonprofit partnerships.

Discover how sacred spaces can become centers of community impact and renewal.



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29 Phil McCarley, Charles Town, WV (CH)  
29 Michael Shea, Mars Hill, NC (CH)  
30 John Emmart, Stoughton, WI (CH)  
30 Jonathan Ludwig, Fresno, CA (CH)  
30 Layne Rogerson, Cheraw, SC (CH)  
31 Tim Madison, Clearwater, FL (CH)  
1 Jennifer Dill, Pittsburgh, PA (CH)  
1 Greg Smith, Emeritus (FP)  
1 Craig Walker, High Point, VA (CH)

2 Dorcus Cater, Snellville, GA (CH)  
2 Christie McTier, Harlem, GA (CH)  
2 Frank Morrow, Emeritus (FP)  
2 Leonora Newell, Emeritus (FP)  
2 Wayne Pope, Crestview, FL (CH)  
3 Mark Reece, Little Creek, VA (CH)  
3 Wayne Sibley, Pineville, LA (CH)  
3 Thomas Wicker, Salado, TX (CH)  
4 Truett, 2011, Waco, TX (FPC)



# Eastertide Blessings

Blessings for our  
sacred callings and  
practices of resurrection

APRIL 5

## Blessing for Hope

*Christine*

*Field Personnel in Africa/Middle East*



Hope is tenacious. Stubborn. Hope shows up and says, this isn't how the story ends. It says, there's more to life than this. Hope says, we're not giving up.

Hope shows up in my office over and over again when women and men, parents and children say, "I want to heal. I want to face the horrors I've experienced." Though the pain is unbearable, I will not let them hold me captive. Hope says, "There can be joy again, even in the darkest valleys."

Hope is defiant. It says, "I will not let fear win. I will study for a future that seems improbable, if not impossible. I will dance and sing and swim in the ocean and sit in the sun, even as homes and lives and villages are destroyed in the next town over." Hope celebrates a long-awaited visa approval, joyously shared with a community of faith, even though any future remains uncertain. Hope doesn't wait until everything is sunshine and roses to arrive. In fact, I think hope grows strongest in the darkness. It's the glimmer of light that makes people ask, how are you able to sing in the midst of such despair.

Hope is unconventional. It makes no logical sense. But hope is born out of an undeniable lived encounter with a living God who says, "Life always comes out of death, even when resurrection seems utterly impossible, when neither our human experience nor our imagination can figure out how anything good could ever come of this."

When we give up, give in, say it's too much to handle, I can't carry it anymore, hope says, "We'll carry you. We're in this together."

Hope is here now. It must be. It's the most core theological conviction of our faith. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Hope is the invitation for us to be resurrection people, to practice it, in the nitty gritty brokenness and injustice of this world. To bear witness to a risen Christ, to the one who overcomes death and destruction and despair.

Teresa of Avila wrote, “Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours, yours are the eyes with which Christ looks compassion on this world.”

May we live like we believe it.

May we be the Easter people we claim to be.

May we live like we believe Christ is still risen.

## **Blessing of Hope**

By Jan Richardson in *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*

So may we know  
the hope  
that is not just  
for someday  
but for this day—  
here, now,  
in this moment  
that opens to us:

hope not made  
of wishes  
but of substance,

hope made of sinew  
and muscle  
and bone,

hope that has breath  
and a beating heart,

hope that will not  
keep quiet  
and be polite,

hope that knows  
how to holler  
when it is called for,

hope that knows  
how to sing  
when there seems  
little cause,

hope that raises us  
from the dead—

not someday  
but this day,  
every day,  
again and  
again and  
again.

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5 Patrick Baxter, Atlanta, GA (CH)  
5 Darcie Jones, Columbia, SC (CH)  
5 Caroline LeGrand (S-CBF Global)  
5 Eddy Ruble, Emeritus (FP)  
6 Lauren Deer, Raleigh, NC (CH)  
6 Steven Mills, Flat Rock, NC (CH)  
6 Jeffrey Wright, Cartersville, GA (CH)  
6 LaCount Anderson, Rocky Mount, NC (EP)  
7 Bonnie Hicks, Woodstock, GA (CH)  
7 Brandon Johnson, Lillington, NC (CH)

7 Mary Wrye, Henderson, KY (CH)  
8 Laura Johnson, New Bern, NC (CH)  
8 Drexel Rayford, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
9 Jessica Hearne, Danville, VA (FP)  
9 Scarlett Jasper, Corbin, KY (FP)  
9 Alexis Johnson, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
9 Jim Pruet, Charlotte, NC (PC)  
9 Steve Vance, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
10 Alan Rogers, Kaneohe, HI (CH)  
11 Laura Broadwater, Louisville, KY (CH)

APRIL 12

## Blessing our Field Personnel

*Laura Ayala*

*CBF Coordinator of Global Missions*



### **Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)**

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

It was during a worship service in Holy Week that I felt the unmistakable call to ministry. In that moment, I was filled with questions and concerns about what lay ahead. It was as if this powerful verse “suddenly appeared” in my Bible, speaking directly to my heart. Since then, whenever I face challenges, this promise reminds me that there is nothing to fear when I trust in the One who called me.

In both life and ministry, we often encounter uncertain and challenging times. Unexpected situations can easily provoke fear and doubt. However, in those moments, we are called to trust God wholeheartedly. His promise to be with us is unwavering, and His strength is sufficient for all we face.

### **A Blessing for Our Field Personnel**

Heavenly Father, we come before You with grateful hearts, acknowledging Your presence and Your promises. As we lift up our field personnel, we ask for Your divine protection over them. Surround them with Your love and strength as they navigate the challenges they face in their ministries.

Lord, grant them courage in moments of uncertainty and remind them of Your unwavering support. May they feel the embrace of the Holy Spirit each day, filling them with peace and assurance. Help them to trust in Your righteous right hand, knowing that You are always with them.

We pray that You guide their decisions and empower their efforts to serve others. Let them be vessels of Your grace and love, shining brightly in the communities they touch.

Thank You, Lord, for the calling You have placed on their lives. We trust in Your goodness and faithfulness, knowing that You will uphold them, as You uphold us, in every situation.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

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12 Leslie Brogdon (S-CBF Global)  
12 Andy Hale (S-North Carolina)  
13 Landon Alberson, Chula, GA (CH)  
13 Alden Gallimore, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
13 Steve Sullivan, Durham, NC (CH)  
13 Brian A. Warfield, Spencer, OK (CH)  
14 Kerri Kroeker, Calgary, Alberta, Canada (CH)  
15 Jeff Flowers, Evans, GA (CH-Ret.)  
15 Jeff Langford (S-Heartland/Global)  
15 Don Pittman, Emeritus (FP)

16 Kay Wright, Virginia Beach, VA (CH)  
17 Allison Anderson, Morgantown, WV (CH)  
17 Mary Beth Beck-Henderson, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
17 David Jones, Newberg, OR (CH)  
17 Jene Smith, Lexington, KY (CH)  
18 Cyrus Bush, Pfafftown, NC (CH)  
18 Ray Cooley, Wallingford, CT (CH)  
18 Mason Jackson III, Fort Myers, FL (CH)  
18 Nathan Solomon, Italy (CH)

APRIL 19

## Called to be Your Church

**Sharon Felton**

*CBF Congregational Advocacy Officer*



### **A Blessing for the Calling of God's People**

Creator God,

Our world feels upside down and backwards for so many:

Our communities, systems and churches.

We are failing to care for our neighbors.

Our fears and lies are overwhelming our desire and ability to care and love all of Creation.

Our hope feels lost.

Our hope feels lost until we remember: You are our hope.

Not governments, or systems or leaders.

Our fears are overwhelming until we remember:

Love casts out fear, and love is our call to action.

Our communities and systems and churches are failing, until we remember:

God, your love commands us and moves us to do justice, to care for our neighbors, to work for the well-being of all.

Our world feels upside down and backwards, until we realize:

We are supposed to upend the world as we know, it and make it a place of hope for all of Your creation.

We are to love and serve and work for justice for all, to be blessings for each person we meet and those we never have the chance to know.

We are to be Your church, that changes the systems so that they are just and work well for everyone.

God, we have much work to do, but today, we can begin the work of loving all our neighbors and doing justice, so that all will experience the hope of Christ, in this world, in this time.

Amen

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

19 Michael Lee, Hendersonville, NC (CH)  
19 Zach Medlin, Salt Lake City UT (CH)  
20 Heidi Ruiz (S-Virginia)  
20 Susan Stephenson, Edmond, OK (CH)  
22 Barry Pennington, Pleasant Hill, MO (CH)  
22 Brittany Ramirez, Philippines (FP)  
22 Judith Wortelboer-Grace, Temple, TX (CH)  
23 David Kolb, Lexington, NC (CH)  
23 Isaac Lopez, Crowley, TX (CH)  
24 Brenda Atkinson, Greenville, SC (CH)

24 Rhonda Gilligan-Gillespie, Memphis, TN (CH)  
24 Laura Mannes, San Antonio, TX (CH)  
24 Travis Smith, Forest City, NC (CH)  
24 Leslie Stith, North Kansas City, MO (CH)  
25 Judah Foushee, 2022, Japan (FPC)  
25 Ellen Garner-Cook, Jefferson, GA (CH)  
25 Connie Graham, Fitzgerald, GA (CH)  
25 Jane Hill, Knoxville, TN (CH)  
25 Victoria Whatley (S-CBF Global)

APRIL 26

## For a New Calling

**David Haun**

*Senior Pastor, Fredericksburg Baptist  
Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia*



One blessing that resonates deeply with me in this season of life and ministry comes from John O'Donohue's *To Bless the Space Between Us*. In his blessing titled "For a New Beginning," O'Donohue writes:

"Awaken your spirit to adventure  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you."

These words strike a deep chord because they speak powerfully to the moment in which I find myself—a moment of stepping into new leadership as senior pastor of Fredericksburg Baptist Church. Transitioning into this role has felt both exhilarating and daunting. While I grew up in this church community and spent nearly two decades serving in various roles, stepping into senior leadership has been a journey of unexpected transformation.

O'Donohue's blessing beautifully captures the essence of trusting God amid uncertainty, embracing risk with faith and courageously moving forward even when the path isn't entirely clear.

The phrase "learn to find ease in risk" particularly resonates with me. It reminds me that leadership is inherently tied to vulnerability. To lead authentically means embracing uncertainty, trusting that God's spirit is guiding and shaping our community, even in moments that feel uncomfortable or unpredictable. The invitation to "awaken your spirit to adventure" inspires me to see leadership as an ongoing pilgrimage rather than a static role, embracing the unknown with a sense of hope and curiosity rather than fear or anxiety.

Within our Fellowship, as we navigate staff changes, ministry reimaginings and new ways of engaging with our broader community, this blessing has become an anchoring prayer for me. It is a constant reminder that while change can be disorienting, it also holds tremendous potential for growth, renewal and deepened faith.

The call to become “home in a new rhythm” also speaks to our church’s collective journey. As we collectively discern God’s call for our congregation, these words reassure us that while the new rhythms of ministry may initially feel unfamiliar or challenging, we will soon discover a deeper, richer community life that feels genuinely home. O’Donohue’s blessing affirms that our souls already sense this hopeful horizon, even if our minds cannot fully grasp it yet.

Claiming this blessing for myself and our Fellowship, I am encouraged by the tangible presence of God’s grace guiding us through these threshold moments. I see this blessing as personal and communal—a shared prayer that invites each member of our congregations to trust that God is leading us to new spaces of ministry, compassion and communal flourishing.

May we, as a Fellowship, embody the courageous, adventurous spirit this blessing offers, holding nothing back as we faithfully step into the sacred unknown that awaits us.

## **For a New Beginning**

By John O’Donohue in *To Bless the Space Between Us*

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,  
Where your thoughts never think to wander,  
This beginning has been quietly forming,  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.  
For a long time it has watched your desire,  
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,  
Noticing how you willed yourself on,  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety  
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,  
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
And out you stepped onto new ground,  
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,  
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will home in a new rhythm,  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

27 Pat Davis, Baton Rouge, LA (CH)  
27 Pete Parks, Williamsburg, VA (CH)  
28 Gary McFarland, Charlotte, NC (PC)  
28 Carrol Wilson (S-CBF Global)  
29 Ted Dougherty, Winston-Salem, NC (PC)  
30 Melissa Neal, Floyd, VA (CH)

30 Charles Wallace, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
1 Michael Coggins, Navarre, FL (CH)  
2 Cathy Cole, Aiken, SC (CH)  
2 Stephen Murphy, Hull, MA (CH)  
2 Deborah Reeves, Dripping Springs, TX (CH)  
2 Victoria Youell, Charleston, SC (CH)

MAY 3

## When God is the Blessing

*Elket Rodríguez*

*CBF Global Migration Advocate*



In a year filled with noise, upheaval and uncertainty, I've found myself drawn back—again and again—to the quiet truth that God's presence is the deepest blessing I know.

Not the gifts God gives, not the answers to prayer, not even the things I'm most grateful for. Just...God.

I think of the words of the psalmist in Psalm 73. For 16 verses, the writer vents frustration and complains that the wicked flourish, while the faithful struggle. But then everything shifts: "Until I entered the sanctuary of God..." That moment of divine perspective reframes everything. Beyond circumstances, the writer realizes, "Whom have I in heaven but you?"

Psalm 42 also echoes the same longing: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?" The author begins in deep despair but slowly remembers that there is something deeper than bitterness and more enduring than sorrow. The turning point doesn't come with changed conditions, but with God's presence. "Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my help and my God."

I've had a year full of blessings, no doubt. I have three incredible children—one of whom still runs to me with open arms yelling, "Papá!" when I come home. I have two sons who hunger to learn and explore life, a heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). And I have a wife who, honestly, defies description, a virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10).

I could write volumes on the blessings in my life. But the real blessing—especially in moments when even those good things fade into the background, when joy is hard to muster, when gratitude feels distant—is this: God is the blessing.

It's easy to get caught up in everything else—even in the good things—and still lose

sight of the giver. But when all else dims, when darkness does not lift, there is One who lifts us, holds us and stays close.

I thank God for nearness, for patience and for faithful companionship. When all other blessings fade, God remains. And that is blessing enough.

## **A Blessing for the Journey**

May you give thanks for all that has been given,  
both the gifts you asked for and the ones you didn't know you needed.

May you notice the holy traces  
on the path beneath your feet,  
the imprint of a faithful God,  
and the footsteps of those who walk beside you.

May you receive the rain of heaven's kindness,  
that falls without condition,  
refreshing the just and the unjust alike.

May you rejoice in the sunlight that rises without favoritism,  
shining on every corner of your story,  
even the ones still under construction.

May you savor the moments  
when time slows,  
and you become aware:

God is near.

God is here.

God is yours.

And above all,  
may you give thanks not only for what God does,  
but for who God is.

Amen.

## **Birthdays this Week:**

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

3 Blake Herridge, Waco, TX (CH)  
3 Doug Jackson, Ardmore, OK (CH)  
3 Alexander Reyes, Reston, VA (CH)  
4 Johann Choi, Fairfield, CA (CH)  
4 Gary Metcalf, Kingsport, TN (CH)  
4 Johnny Richards, Raleigh, NC (CH)  
4 Skip Wisenbaker, Asheville, NC (CH-Ret.)  
5 Austin, 2004, Southeast Asia (FPC)  
5 Jacquelyn Green, Roanoke, VA (CH)  
5 Karen Long, Birmingham, AL (CH)

5 Sarah Wilson, Henderson, NC (CH)  
6 Carol Dalton, Swannanoa, NC (CH-Ret.)  
6 Adam Granger (S-CBF Global)  
6 Jessica Jasper, Elizabethtown, KY (CH)  
7 Allison Rodgers, Elizabethtown, KY (CH)  
8 Rusty Elkins, Edmond, OK (CH)  
8 Brenda Pace Jones, Hendersonville, NC (PC)  
9 Rich Behers, Lakeland, FL (CH)  
9 David Harding, Emeritus (FP)  
9 Leigh Jackson, Austin, TX (CH)

MAY 10

## Blessing Seminarans

**Benjami “Benji” Suprice**

*Collegiate Minister and Yale Divinity School M.Div. candidate, New London, Connecticut*



### Matthew 6:10 (NIV)

Your kingdom come  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

### A Divinity Student’s Blessing

I bless you to live boldly into the calling placed on your life—to walk as a minister and student, a learner and leader, a chef and mechanic. May you discern how your work intersects with the suffering and hopes of the world, seeing your research, writing and presence as opportunities to reveal the heart and way of Jesus. I bless you to embody the way of Christ in contexts where what it means is forgotten.

I bless you to stand as a witness against the ways that are anti-Christ among us. May the pulpit not be an escape from the world’s pain, but a place of preparation, equipping you to see God’s love woven throughout it. I bless you to find courage in the lineage of prophets, disciples and saints who spoke truth to power, even when it was costly.

I bless you to remember that Jesus did not pray for a distant heaven, but for God’s will to be done on Earth as it is in heaven. May you witness the Kingdom of God breaking through in moments of truth spoken, love enacted, justice pursued and faith embodied. Though we may not see the fullness of this Kingdom in our lifetimes, I bless you to continue this prayer and God’s work, trusting that Jesus considered this prayer holy.

And when it is easy to forget, may you remember that God is with us. We have faced challenges before, and we will navigate them again—together and with God’s abiding presence. May this assurance be the blessing that leads you forward. Amen.



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Called in Context Discussion Guide

[www.cbf.net/calledincontext](http://www.cbf.net/calledincontext)

### Nurturing Non-Traditional Ministers

Called in Context shares the stories of vibrant ministries that emerge when churches look within: at the gifts of their own members, at those in their community with non-traditional callings and at the relationships that can sustain lasting, meaningful ministry.

This guide equips churches to recognize and nurture callings within their own congregations. Featuring personal stories, videos and conversation prompts, it helps leadership teams and search committees discern gifts in their community and explore innovative approaches to ministry.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

11 Larry Ballew, Emeritus (EP)  
11 Leah Boling, Bonaire, GA (CH)  
11 Robbi Francovich, Emeritus (FP)  
11 Jonna Garvin, Manassas, VA (CH)  
11 Cy Miller, Marion, NC (CH)  
13 Tracy Dunn, Hereford, TX (CH)  
13 Samson Naidoo, Denison, TX (CH)  
14 Scott McBroom, Charleston, SC (PC)

15 Patrick Cardwell, Chapel Hill, NC (CH)  
15 Melina Grier, St. Joseph, MO (CH)  
15 James Jeffers, Hoover, AL (CH)  
15 Larry Layne, Montgomery, AL (CH)  
16 Lauren Hall, Katy, TX (CH)  
16 Steven Harris, Salem, VA (PC)  
16 John Reeser, Sautee Nacoochee, GA (CH)

MAY 17

## For Those Planting Seeds

*Jeff Lee*

*Field Personnel in Skopje, North Macedonia*



### **A Blessing from a Farmer**

A blessing for new life. The springtime brings with it new life and growth. For us to participate in that new life requires us to fully understand what is occurring. We live in a world of constant changes, and we must find our place in the everchanging landscape we face daily. We must facilitate new life.

Blessed is the seed. As we plant a seed for potential new life, we focus on what is set before us. We have an opportunity to facilitate new life. We are the caretakers of what is new and fresh. We live in a broken world but there is hope with new life.

Blessed are the hands. New life requires cultivation. When a seed is planted it requires hands to place that seed into the healthy soil. The soil needs nutrients and moisture to encourage the new life to spring forth from the ground. It requires hands to cultivate and to prune the new life—and that are sometimes calloused and worn from years of tending to multiple gardens of life.

Blessed is the land. The land is the home for new life. We are homemakers on this journey of life. We are required to work and change the land to improve the chances for new life to flourish in sometimes harsh conditions.

Blessed is the rain. Water is a source of life. We cannot live without water. Often, we pass through a period of drought and famine. The rain brings that new life in time of struggle and pain.

Blessed is the harvest. The harvest is part of the cycle of life. We benefit from the harvest, which brings new life for us. We are part of the cycle of new life and death. It is a constant part of who we are. A blessing from a farmer is understanding the cycle and providing for those in need around them.

Blessed is the table. May your table be full and shared with those around you. A blessing from a farmer is to fill your table. May it overflow to create and maintain life in your house and community. A blessing from a farmer is understanding the greatest commandment, to love God and to love our neighbor.

The blessing from the farmer is the understanding that life is an ever-changing journey.

Peace be the journey.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
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FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

17 Jennifer Call, Salem, VA (CH)  
17 Nell Green, Emeritus (FP)  
17 Juan Turcios-Cristales, Richmond Hill, GA (CH)  
17 Matthew Weems, Columbia, SC (CH)  
18 Clay Polson, Waco, TX (CH)  
18 Greg Slate, Littleton, CO (CH)  
19 Mary Ahn, Round Lake, IL (CH)  
19 Mark Sumrall, Houston, TX (CH)  
20 Julie Perry, Charlottesville, VA (CH)

20 Matthew Rehnborg (S-CBF Global)  
20 Marcy Thomas, Brentwood, TN (CH)  
21 Carson Foushee, Japan (FP)  
21 Pat, Emeritus (FP)  
21 Ron Winstead, Emeritus (FP)  
22 Jon Ivy, Tuscaloosa, AL (CH)  
22 Travis Yelton, San Antonio, TX (CH-Ret.)  
23 Polly Barnes, Brandon, MS (CH)  
23 John Schumacher, Columbia, SC (CH)

MAY 24

## A Missionary Psalm

**Rick Sample**

*Field Personnel in San Francisco Bay Area, California*



I didn't grow up knowing that I wanted to be a missionary. In fact, as a sophomore at Samford University, I decided to try summer missions for one summer only. Afterward, I ended up being a summer missionary for five years. That first summer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was challenging to me. I had to go door-to-door witnessing! For this introvert, it was torturous to knock on 1200+ doors that summer. All summer long, I thought that it would be my only missionary service in my lifetime.

What I really liked was a sports club I started with some teenage boys in the neighborhood, playing baseball or basketball three afternoons each week. After each game, I led a brief devotional and prayer in the park. On the last night of the summer, I invited all the boys out for ice cream. After the ice cream, I presented each youth with a small New Testament hoping they would read the Bible after the summer. What happened next crushed me.

These teenagers whom I had spent the summer ministering to and praying for mocked me for being a Christian, and, before running off never to see me again, they ripped some pages out of the Bibles and threw them in the gutter. I started to cry and as I bent down to pick up the torn sheaves of Scripture, something struck deep within my soul. It was in that moment that I knew God was calling me to be a missionary for life. What was momentarily an unexpectedly tragic moment was a threshold I stepped over that became a lifelong BLESSING.

The next summer, I was part of a Samford mission team. Four of us spent the summer in LeFrak City, an inner-city enclave in Queens, New York City. And today, in my third decade serving with CBF Global Missions, I can say that my lifelong BLESSING is renewed every day. At the end of my summer in Queens, I penned a poem based on the 23rd Psalm.

# A Summer Missionary's 23rd Psalm

By Rick Sample, summer missionary 1983, Queens, New York City

The Lord is my Supervisor, I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down on my plywood and foam; He leadeth me through the playground and down 57th Avenue.

He restoreth my soul with laughter; He leadeth me in the paths of Vacation Bible School for His name's sake.

Yea, though I ride through the subways at night, and transfer at Times Square, I will fear no muggers: for Thou art with me; the smiles of the children they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of 10 pairs of eyes peering in at the terrace door; Thou anointest my walls with graffiti; my cup runneth over with people to love.

Surely thoughts of Artif, Caleb, Charles, Joseph, Freddy and Robert will follow me all the days of my life: and I will be a richer person because of New York City.

## Birthdays this Week:

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

24 Paulette Porter-Hallmon, Spartanburg, SC (CH)

24 Jordan Tripp, Raleigh, NC (CH)

25 Rick Burnette, Immokalee, FL (FP)

25 Daniel Mitchell, Columbus, GA

25 Kelly Russell, Tuttle, OK (CH)

26 Stephanie Coyne, Conyers, GA (CH)

27 Grace Freeman, Dunwoody, GA (CH)

28 Kenneth LeBon, Fort Jackson, SC (CH)

28 David Smith, Alpharetta, GA (PC)

29 Aleesa Naish, Birmingham, AL (CH)

30 Beom Jung, Chattanooga, TN (CH)

**MAY 31**

## **Blessing for Emeritus Field Personnel**

***Kim Wyatt***

*Field Personnel in Raleigh, North Carolina*

**Matthew 25:23 (NIV)**

His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"



### **A Blessing for Emeritus Field Personnel**

You have been faithful in both the small and the large responsibilities. We celebrate with you many years of your faithful service! As we consider all the ways that you have shown love, devotion and obedience towards God, we are grateful. For the plethora of ways that you show love for your neighbors due to the welling up of the love for God deep within you, we are forever indebted.

For the tireless joy with which you have served others and the continuation of this service that will follow beyond your tenure with CBF, we are thankful.

As you go, you go with our love and our admiration. You go with our abiding appreciation for the costs of your discipleship to serve among "the least of these" which often took you far from your extended family and your country of birth. Yet always, even on the rough, uncertain days, you continued because of the call of Christ deep within you.

So again, I say, well done good and faithful servants. Your light shines so brightly that you will not be deterred by retirement, but will continue to serve our glorious Lord out of your deep abiding love for God and your neighbor.

Words of blessing and appreciation to our field personnel who retired in June 2025 (and to all those that have retired before these):

Anna Anderson

Chaouki and Maha Boulos

Steve Clark

Mary

Lynn Hutchinson

Jenny Jenkins  
Karen Morrow  
Mary VanRheenen  
Cindy Ruble  
Greg Smith  
Sue Smith  
Marc Wyatt

“I pray that the Lord will bless and protect you, and that he will show you mercy and kindness. May the Lord be good to you and give you peace.” —Numbers 6:24-26.

## Birthdays this Week:

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

31 Stacey Buford, Murfreesboro, TN (CH)  
31 Blake Miller, Greenville, SC (CH)  
31 LouRae Myhre-Weber, Twin Bridges, MT (CH)  
31 Kelley Woggon, Louisville, KY (CH)  
1 Thong Lun, Houston, TX (CH)  
1 Karen Zimmerman, Waco, TX (FP)  
2 Durham Harris, Cincinnati, OH (CH)  
2 Inakali Kuruvilla, San Antonio, TX (CH)  
2 Gary Sparks, Tyler, TX (CH)  
3 Susan Arnold, La Grange, KY (CH)  
3 Sean Burson, Minot, ND (CH)  
4 Laura Davis (S-Virginia)

4 Mark Johnson, Hoover, AL (CH)  
4 Sarah Smith, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
4 Harrison Wilmes, Lexington, KY (CH)  
5 Jennifer Clamon, Indianapolis, IN (CH)  
5 Bert Montgomery, Lexington, KY (CH)  
5 Stacy Sergent, Mount Pleasant, SC (CH)  
5 David Smelser, Preston, MS (CH)  
5 Kody Witt, San Antonio, TX (CH-Ret.)  
6 Erskine Alvis, Hillsborough, NC (CH)  
6 Michael Costner, Valdese, NC (CH)  
6 Parker Ebling-Artz, Kansas City, MO (CH)  
6 Greg McClain, Lillington, NC (CH)

A landscape photograph of a yellow field, possibly a field of wildflowers or a crop field, stretching towards a horizon. The sky is filled with large, dramatic, grey and white clouds. The overall mood is serene and contemplative. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image in a bright yellow color. There are yellow lines forming a crosshair shape in the top left and bottom right corners.

# Ordinary Time Blessings

Blessings for our  
everyday, ordinary lives

**JUNE 7**

# **Blessing for Everyday Life**

***Matt Norman***

*Field Personnel in Barcelona, Spain*



## **Romans 12:1-2 (The Message)**

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

## **A Blessing for Everyday Life**

inspired by Romans 12:1-2 (MSG)

May you wake each morning  
not with haste,  
but with holy attention...  
to the breath in your lungs,  
the light stretching across your walls,  
the soft ache or quiet joy that reminds you  
that you are alive, and you are loved.

May your coffee, your routine,  
your conversations and calendar  
become altars of offering...  
not perfect, or polished,  
but placed freely before God  
who delights in your ordinary.

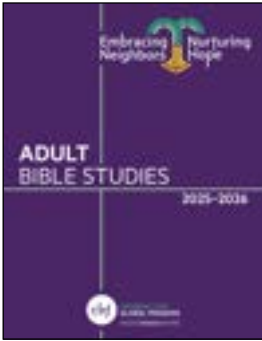
May you slow down enough  
to truly listen  
to the rustle of leaves,  
or horns from the street,  
the tone behind the words,  
the still small voice  
nudging you toward love.

May your eyes  
be trained by grace  
to see wonder again:  
the sacred stitched  
into sidewalks and dishes,  
emails and errands,  
the Divine hidden in plain sight.

When the world tells you to speed up,  
consume more,  
dislike,  
give up,  
fit in and blend,  
may you dare to fix your gaze  
on the God who beckons you toward  
relationship and transformation.

And in your everyday life,  
may you hear how God  
whispers your name,  
with deep gladness.  
And may you respond  
not later, not someday,  
but now,  
in the quiet trust  
that this life,  
just as it is,  
is where holiness begins.

Amen.



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Offering for Global Missions Bible Studies

[www.cbf.net/ogm](http://www.cbf.net/ogm)

### Exploring the OGM Theme in Scripture

CBF provides free resources for your church to support the Offering for Global Missions and learn how field personnel are cultivating beloved community, bearing witness to Jesus Christ and encouraging transformational development among those forgotten or forsaken in the world.

OGM Bible studies exploring Colossians 3:12-14 and the theme of this year's offering—Embracing Neighbors, Nurturing Hope—are available for adults, youth and children.

## Birthdays this Week:

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PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 7 Diann Berry, Emeritus (FP)                 | 10 Ansia Picou Chahoy, Highland, NY (CH)     |
| 7 Jenny Perkins, San Antonio, TX (CH)        | 10 Cindy Goza, Little Rock, AR (CH)          |
| 7 Butch Stillwell, Candler, NC (CH)          | 10 Christopher McDaniel, Charleston, SC (CH) |
| 7 Carol Wilkinson, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)    | 10 Aaron McGinnis, Dublin, GA (CH)           |
| 8 Larry Lawhon, Boone City, NC (CH)          | 10 Michael Osment, Martin, TN (CH)           |
| 8 Janice Newell, Emeritus (FP)               | 10 Kim Wyatt, Raleigh, NC (FP)               |
| 8 Randy Parks, Sparta, NJ (CH)               | 11 Joshua Hearne, Danville, VA (EP)          |
| 8 Clay Porter, Stanton, TX (CH)              | 11 Thomas Lewis, St. Augustine, FL (CH)      |
| 8 Joseph Primeaux, Chesapeake, VA (CH- Ret.) | 12 Mathew Brown, Phoenix, AZ (CH)            |
| 8 Jeromy Wells, Jefferson, WI (CH)           | 12 Mark Chambers, Ness City, KS (CH)         |
| 9 Michelle Cayard, Emeritus (FP)             | 12 Emma Jane Conley, Round Rock, TX (CH)     |
| 9 Maria Robertson, Canton, GA (CH)           | 12 Brady Lanoue, Arlington, VA (CH)          |
| 9 Pamela Stiles, Garland, TX (CH)            | 13 Christine, Africa/Middle East (FP)        |
| 9 Sara Stubbs, Monroe, NC (CH)               | 13 Richard Forest, Louisville, KY (CH)       |
| 9 Patricia Taylor, Tuscaloosa, AL (CH)       | 13 Kim Thompson, Columbia, SC (CH)           |
| 9 Doug Wiggington, Pineville, LA (CH)        |  |

**JUNE 14**

## **The Blessing of Song**

**Brooke**

*Field Personnel in Waco, Texas*



### **Zephaniah 3:17**

He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

“He will rejoice over you with singing.”

My mom is a singer. She’s been a music minister since the 1990s, a time when only a handful of women served as Baptist music ministers in Texas. Our home was always filled with singing, and maybe that’s why I love this verse so much. I love my mom’s singing, and I love what it represents. My mom worships our Lord through singing.

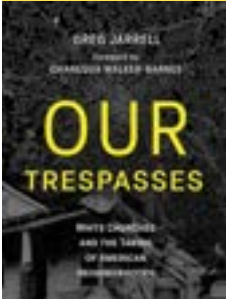
To rejoice is to feel or show great joy and delight. I cherish the image of God delighting in me through singing. What will that be like, one day, when God Himself sings over me? I know the joy I see on my mom’s face when she sings. How much more joy will there be when the Lord sings over me?

“He will quiet you with His love.”

My life is anything but quiet right now. With two teenagers in the house, there’s rarely a dull moment. But I crave quiet. I crave silence. I long for stillness when the weight of the day starts piling up. God can give me that peace. He can give you that peace. He can calm and quiet us with His love, if we let Him. I need that reminder. I need to let God quiet my heart with His love.

To be quieted by God’s love means to rest in His presence, comfort and peace, even in the middle of chaos. It reminds me of a mother cradling her newborn, gently soothing him as he cries. Imagine the love on that mother’s face as she quiets her child. How much greater is the love of our Heavenly Father as He quiets us?

As we move through our days, let’s remember this beautiful truth: God rejoices over us, and He quiets us with His love.



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Book Discussion Guides

[www.cbf.net/bookclub](http://www.cbf.net/bookclub)

### Important Topics. Great Authors

CBF book discussion guides invite conversation through thought-provoking questions and reflections. Free to download, these discussion guides are perfect for reading circles, small groups or personal use.

The Resource Hub on the CBF website provides access to more than 50 discussion guides from previous years. Visit [www.cbf.net/resources](http://www.cbf.net/resources) to explore this archive of sortable resources.

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14 Derrick Young, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
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18 Bill Hayes, Bogart, GA (CH)  
18 Mary Ligon, York, PA (CH)  
18 Ethan Todd, Monroe, GA (CH)  
19 Maime Murphy, Boca Raton, FL (CH)  
20 Tim Johns, Buffton, SC (CH)  
20 Jeff Lancaster, Cartwright, OK (CH)

**JUNE 21**

## **Pause. Breathe. Rest.**

***Anna Beth Cross***

*Associate Minister for Students and  
Digital Discipleship, Greystone Baptist  
Church, Raleigh, North Carolina*



### **A Blessing to Do Nothing**

Blessed are you  
when you reach a moment  
after a chaotic season  
or a busy week  
and find just a sliver of time  
to do nothing.

Instead of looking for a chore to check off or a task to complete,  
Pause. Breathe. Rest.

Instead of searching to fill half an hour of your day,  
Pause. Breathe. Rest.

Instead of turning on the news and being inundated with noise,  
Pause. Breathe. Rest.

Instead of feeling the urge to keep doing, keep working, keep striving,  
Pause. Breathe. Rest.

Our world wants us to keep going until we can't,  
to pour ourselves out until we are empty.  
Our jobs and lives require so much of us,  
our weeks and days are never ending.

But when a moment of pause sneaks up on you,  
Take it.  
Breathe deeply.  
Close your eyes.  
It's okay to do nothing.  
It's okay to take a moment for yourself,  
To breathe and be filled,  
To rest and find peace.

You need it;  
your body, soul, mind and spirit need it.

Blessed are you when you do nothing,  
even if for just a few minutes.

I am going to be honest, I am the last person who would take this blessing to heart. I live by my calendar, to-do lists and outlined plans. In fact, I enjoy all these things. I am always thinking months in advance and love checking off things on my many checklists. My family would probably laugh at the fact that I chose to write this blessing because I am not one to stop and do nothing. I always feel the need to do something.

But this year I am learning the importance of rest and renewal. Colleagues and friends have challenged me to find moments to pause in my own life. Our congregation has even engaged in a season of rest during a time of transition and transformation. The idea of rest or sabbath is countercultural. Our society tells us to do the opposite, to focus on work, success, accomplishment and doing. Either we fill our schedules full, or they are filled to the brim for us.

As we read in Genesis 1, God created and then God rested. We too were created and called to rest and experience sabbath. Pausing during our chaotic day allows us a moment to be filled with God's presence and allows our bodies and minds to be renewed. Moments of pause may surprise us; they aren't often scheduled, and sometimes they randomly show up after a few busy hours. Rather than going to the next task or seeking out something that can or should be done, we can choose to do nothing. The idea of doing nothing can make us fearful or even guilty, feeling that we should be doing something. But doing nothing is restful, and we need to rest and be filled, because those moments are few and far between. God is still present in those moments of nothing, so give yourself permission to do nothing for a moment today.

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26 Sharon Fry, Midlothian, VA (CH)  
26 Anna Jacks, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
26 Tamara Witte-Walczac, Baltimore, MD (CH)  
27 Alicia Lee, North Macedonia (FP)

**JUNE 28**

# **A Blessing for the Distracted**

***Carson Foushee***

***Field Personnel in Kanazawa, Japan***



Our distractions can take us by surprise.  
Gently draining our time and energy  
Altering the way we think and feel  
Drawing us away from practices and community of light and love  
And into the lonely darkness.  
Devices, desires, dependence.  
They dig their claws in deeply  
And hold on for death's sake.

## **A Blessing for the Distracted**

Beloved,  
Blessed are you who lift up your eyes  
To the Creator who made Heaven and Earth.  
Blessed are you who lift up your eyes  
To the Christ who has shown the way of truth and life.  
Blessed are you who lift up your eyes  
To the Spirit present within and all around.  
Blessed are you.

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2 Aaron Mussat, Mission, KS (CH)  
2 Meghan Rush, Midlothian, VA (CH)  
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3 Leland Parks, Louisville, KY (CH)  
3 Ascanio Peguero, Fort Worth, TX (CH)  
4 José Jimenez-Abrams, Austell, GA (CH)

JULY 5

## Live Simply

**Jessica Hearne**

*Field Personnel in Danville, Virginia*



So, friends, every day do something  
that won't compute. Love the Lord.  
Love the world. Work for nothing.  
Take all that you have and be poor.  
Love someone who does not deserve it...  
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.  
Say that your main crop is the forest  
that you did not plant,  
that you will not live to harvest...  
As soon as the generals and the politicians  
can predict the motions of your mind,  
lose it. Leave it as a sign  
to mark the false trail, the way  
you didn't go. Be like the fox  
who makes more tracks than necessary,  
some in the wrong direction.  
Practice resurrection.  
(Excerpt from "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer's Liberation Front" by Wendell Berry)

I have been trying to live more simply for many years. Living simply for me means asking myself what it is that I really need. It means questioning the necessity of things, especially things that are made of plastic, are harmful to the environment, use an excess of resources, or hurt people in their production. Living a simpler life is not a change that happens overnight. In fact, I have been working on it for over 15 years and still feel that I have a long way to go.

I have a printout of the poem above tacked to the bulletin board above my desk, and every time I sit to answer emails, attend a Zoom meeting, record receipts or any number of other computer-related tasks, I will glance up at it and reread a few lines. Wendell Berry's "manifesto" serves as a reminder to me of the value of living simply. He talks about the joy that comes from contemplating leaf mold, listening to carrion

and laughing in the face of the “end of the world.” He reminds me of the importance of being a good steward of the future – even though I won’t live to see it.

The idea of living life simply, of being close to the earth and nature, of eschewing the urge to buy and accumulate, is so counter to the narratives that bombard us daily through the media and through our own human desires, that Berry compares it to resurrection. In order for life to flourish, after all, some things must die. In my garden, the plants that die become the compost that feeds new growth. In the forest on the edge of my town, the trees die and become food for mushrooms and lichen. In my life, my selfishness and needless want must die so my love of the world and all of the life in it can flourish.

### **A Blessing for Living Simply**

May you daily find time to love and appreciate something that you did not create.

May you constantly forget that “time is money.”

If you can’t forget, may you find the value in things that don’t pay.

May your life confuse and confound the algorithms.

May you learn to live simply.

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11 Jamie Rorrer (S-North Carolina)

**JULY 12**

## **House Blessing**

**Jay Kieve**

*CBF Abuse Prevention and Response  
Advocate & Director of Ministerial  
Transitions*



### **House Blessing**

#### **Invocation**

Let us pray: Gracious God, who supplies us with every blessing in abundance, lift our hearts in gratitude and thanksgiving. Open us to remember the gifts we seldom notice, the bounty we take for granted, the rich possibilities you provide. For bread without scarcity, for water that is pure, for this house to live in and friends to enjoy, we give you humble thanks. For beauty and bounty, for healing and hope, for the gospel of Christ, we lift our voices in joyful praise. Dwell with us now. Amen

#### **Scripture**

The scriptures Jesus knew contained the command:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Jesus quoted this, as the first and greatest commandment.”—Deuteronomy 5:4-9

#### **Fixing the Signs of Blessing**

So in that great tradition, we affix to this door frame reminders of God’s calling and declarations of our prayer and hope. [Written in chalk on the door frame.]

“Hear” – Shema (שמע) – the first word of the commandments from Moses’ instruction to Israel – “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength.”

“Peace” – (εἰρήνη) written as the prayer for all who enter or depart from this house symbols for Christ

Chi and Rho (XP) – the hope of this house and the hope for all our salvation

## Prayer of Blessing

from St. Stephen’s Church, London

O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife.

Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling-block to children, nor to straying pets, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter’s power. God make the door of this house the gateway to thine eternal kingdom.

Loving God, bless this home. May it be a place of safety and hospitality. Grant that faith, charity and good health triumph over evil. May your word be cherished and obeyed in this home. We give praise and thanksgiving to you, and to your Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen

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12 Christopher Morris, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
12 Stacey Pickering, Tyndall AFB, FL (CH)  
12 Wendy VanHosen, Suffolk, VA (CH)  
13 Craig Stevens, Saluda, SC (CH)  
14 John Deal, Emeritus (FP)  
14 Denise Massey, Lilburn, GA (CH)  
14 David Stamile, Waco, TX (CH)  
15 Cameron Hunt, Columbus, OH (CH)  
15 Jean Randolph, Swannanoa, NC (CH)  
15 James Tippins, Fernandina Beach, FL (CH)  
16 Amy Blevins, Mountain Home, TN (CH)

16 Mark Hart, Fair Oaks Ranch, TX (CH)  
16 David McDaniel, Kansas City, MO (CH)  
17 Cindy Meadows, Roanoke, VA (CH)  
17 Leanna Pearse, St. Louis, MO (CH)  
17 Kimberly Sheehan, Nashville, TN (CH)  
18 David Graves, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
18 Timothy Hunter, Gatesville, TX (CH)  
18 Luke Tyler Moody, Lexington, KY (CH)  
18 Tom O’Neal, Charlotte, NC (PC)  
18 Collin Wilcox, Lubbock, TX (CH)

JULY 19

## Blessing for Sound

*Jonathan Bailey*

*Field Personnel in Bali, Indonesia*



### **Blessing for Sound**

by David Whyte in *The Bell and the Blackbird*

I thank you,  
for the smallest sound,  
for the way my ears open  
even before my eyes,  
as if to remember  
the way everything began  
with an original, vibrant, note,  
and I thank you for this  
everyday original music,  
always being rehearsed,  
always being played,  
always being remembered  
as something new  
and arriving, a tram line  
below in the city street,  
gull cries, or a ship's horn  
in the distant harbour,  
so that in waking I hear voices  
even where there is no voice  
and invitations where  
there is no invitation  
so that I can wake with you  
by the ocean, in summer  
or in the deepest seemingly  
quietest winter,  
and be with you  
so that I can hear you

even with my eyes closed,  
even with my heart closed,  
even before I fully wake.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that a blessing for sound would be offered by a musician, that working so often with the magical power of music would lead me to the deepest sensitivity to the blessings it offers. However, it is not necessarily so. Frequent exposure to the stimulus of sound tires my ear and mind and deadens the senses. Sometimes I need silence. Pure and without exception. It is in silence that I'm most aware of God. Like Elijah in the cave, I sometimes sense God most keenly when the chaos of life ebbs for a moment. How thankful I am for those times, few though they are.

Whyte's "Blessing for Sound" reminds me how rare such silence is. His blessing blesses by its clear cry that all life is sound, vibration, resonance between me and you and all creation and "even when there is no voice." Attending to the sounds of life and even to the echoes of what is no more awakens me to that ever-present invitation to wakefulness and to the greatest blessing it has to offer: the surprise of you sitting beside me.

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19 Jason Pittman, Emeritus (FP)  
20 Carol Ashworth, Richmond, VA (CH)  
20 Matthew Fuller, Milwaukee, WI (CH)  
20 Tim Mayhall, Dothan, AL (CH)  
20 Stephanie Pace, Marion, NC (CH)  
21 Peter Arges, Durham, NC (CH)  
21 Susan Lanford, Wichita Falls, TX (CH)  
21 Twyla Nelson, Jackson Springs, NC (CH)  
21 Walter White, Arlington, TX (CH)  
21 Lavonia Winford, Mildenhall, UK (CH)  
22 Jessie Kearns, Abbeville, SC (CH)

22 Sara Long, McGregor, TX (CH)  
22 Bonnie Reedy, Lumberton, NC (CH)  
23 Butch Green, Emeritus (FP)  
23 Nathanael Blessington Thadikanda, Richmond, VA (CH)  
23 Mark Traeger, Hurlburt, FL (CH)  
24 Glynn Ford, Reston, VA (PC)  
24 Jeff Huett (S-CBF Global)  
24 Laurel Link, Winston-Salem, NC (PC)  
24 Ronald Oliver, Goshen, KY (CH)  
24 Casey Ramirez, Philippines (FP)  
25 Laura Tadlock, Birmingham, AL (CH)

JULY 26

## For a Time of Discernment

*João Moraes*

*Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Louisiana*



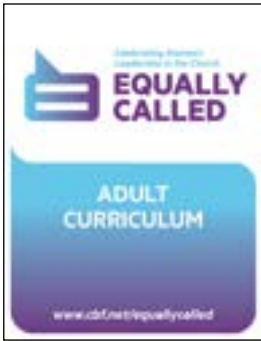
It may be that you need to slow down and consider which direction to take. Amidst the rush of daily living, discernment may seem too long of a word to consider, let alone to practice. So many of us move on and move fast because it simply takes too much energy to stop a system perfected for efficiency. Joined to the system, we are well-oiled cogs spinning tirelessly in some direction: no time to think which one, no time to consider right from wrong. That's when we need wisdom.

Other times, though, movement is exactly what we lack. While some cannot stop to think, others cannot stop thinking—with their bodies paralyzed by analysis, their heads run wild with endless flow charts that attempt to predict the potential outcomes of every single decision. We become overwhelmed with fear, oppressed by anxiety and unable to move out of the sludge. We fool ourselves believing that a strong dose of certainty would solve our problems. But oftentimes, we already know what is right; we need courage to do the right thing.

Some days we need wisdom; other days we need courage. So, I pray that you may find in the Lord what you need in each instance.

### **A Blessing for Wisdom and Courage**

May the Lord grant you time and space to slow down when the world rushes by.  
May His gentle hands hold you steady as you dwell in the wisdom from above.  
May His strong arm give you courage to take the next steps even when the way is unclear.  
May your faith move you through uncertain situations,  
And may you never forget: the One who calls you also goes before you.



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Equally Called Bible Studies

[www.cbf.net/equallycalled](http://www.cbf.net/equallycalled)

### Curriculum Affirming the Calling of Women

Consider how Scripture reveals God's plan for all of humanity—male and female together—to serve God's people.

This 4-session video and curriculum resource for all ages will help your church articulate the biblical and theological basis for affirming the calling of women and nurture a culture that more fully welcomes their leadership.

Available in age-graded formats for Adults, Youth and Children.

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27 Sandra Smith, Moore, SC (CH)  
28 Daniel Fairchild, Panama City, FL (CH)  
28 Matthew Greg, Columbia, SC (CH)  
29 Colin Kroll (S-CBF Global)  
29 Wayne Morris, Lawton, OK (CH)  
29 Karen Morrow, Emeritus (FP)  
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29 William (Butch) Wise, Spokane, WA (CH)  
30 Paul Byrd, Cumming, GA (CH)  
30 James Francovich, Emeritus (FP)  
30 Brenda Sholar, Creedmoor, NC (CH)  
30 Garnett White, Midlothian, VA (PC)  
31 Amber Blackwell-Childers, Inman, SC (CH)  
31 Brian Foreman (S-CBF Global)  
31 Cindy Thorpe, Florence, SC (CH)  
31 James Tille, Lakewood, WA (PC)  
1 Stephen Saunders, Live Oak, TX (CH)



# Blessings Around the World

Blessings from the places and  
people we serve and for those  
who minister around the world

**AUGUST 2**

## **For the Seasons**

***Brittany Ramirez***

***Field Personnel in Baguio, Philippines***



Our family moved to Baguio City, Philippines, in the summer of 2024 to work alongside the overseas Chinese population. We quickly realized that there are only two seasons in the Philippines: wet season and dry season. We had arrived at the beginning of the wet season. This meant we were immediately introduced to constant rain, typhoons and power outages. I must admit, it was not easy to notice the gifts of the wet season.

As I write this, we have been in our new ministry location for almost a year, and while I can't say I am looking forward to the quick return of that rainy season, I am thankful for how God has guided our family to recognize holy moments of growth and opportunities for ministry in this past year. Starting in a new ministry context with new culture, language and seasons to adapt to can feel like slow work. After having served in mainland China for many years and our plans and calling there ending abruptly, it is hard to start over. I had already done the language learning, I had already invested in learning about the culture and context I served, I already spent years investing in relationships and seeing the blossoming of ministry.

But to start over requires a trust of this current season I am in. A hope that God can unfold our gifts once again with the gentle power of a blossom opening petal by petal. Sometimes the growth isn't as fast as I would like. Sometimes I cannot see the end of the rainy season.

May I turn my eyes in hope toward the promise of the flowers in bloom at the Panagbenga flower festival during the dry season. May I trust that in the slow work of building relationships with Chinese students, and teaching English at the seminary, and learning the local language; through all the seasons of transition, and growth, and newness, God is faithful to God's calling in our lives. May we walk in each season, with eyes open to the holy moments of the ever-working Spirit of God in our midst.

## Seasons

By Sharlande Sledge in *Prayers and Litanies for the Christian Season*

Everlasting God,  
When summer days are long,  
We move from early daylight to late sunsets,  
Noticing the gifts of the season;  
Fresh vegetables ready to be picked in the cool of the morning,  
Trees offering a pool of shade on a hot afternoon,  
Glittering light of fireflies at night.  
All these gifts refresh us, God,  
And remind us that your love for us knows no special season.  
Guide our eyes to holy moments  
We might otherwise miss.  
Unfold our gifts with gentle power  
Of a blossom opening petal by petal.  
Turn our eyes in hope toward you,  
Our God of all creation,  
All nurturing love,  
And all new life.  
Through the seasons of our souls,  
We join with all nature in manifold witness  
To your great faithfulness, mercy and love.

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3 Mary Ellen Yates, Louisville, KY (PC)  
4 Lindsey Moser, Colorado Springs, CO (CH)  
4 Paisley, 2012, Waco, TX (FPC)  
4 Mark Pruitt, Martinsburg, WV (CH)  
4 Diane Stamey, Clyde, NC (PC)  
5 Susan Allen, Midway, KY (CH)  
5 Charles Hamilton, Stone Mountain, GA (CH)  
5 Ronald Howard, Tuscaloosa, AL (CH)

5 Donald Lederer, Kingsport, TN (CH)  
5 Mary, Emeritus (FP)  
5 John Oliver, Durham, NC (CH)  
5 Tiffany Seaford, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
6 Larry Hamm, Greenwood, IN (CH)  
6 Deborah Jenkins, Colorado Springs, CO (CH-  
Ret.)  
7 Merrie Harding, Emeritus (FP)  
8 Janée Angel, Belgium (FP)  
8 LuAnne Prevost, Knoxville, TN (CH)

**AUGUST 9**

**Mary VanRheenen**

**Field Associate in The Netherlands**



**James 3:10**

From the same mouth comes a blessing and a curse.  
My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.

Words have power, power to lift and power to destroy. As James notes, with our tongues we bless the Lord and Father, and also curse men, who are made in the likeness of God. He adds, brothers and sisters, that this ought not to be so.

A 40-something woman in our Dutch church implicitly realized that. When she walked out of her marriage, she could have defended her choice by bad-mouthing her ex-husband. However, she told me that she was not going to discuss her reasons for leaving or try to justify her choice because that would involve revealing negative things about her ex. He was still in the church, and she did not want to publicize not-so-nice things about his flaws. She refused to curse him.

Earlier, another woman came back to our Dutch church after her husband left her for another woman. She did not mind telling me all about his soap-opera-like craziness. She broadcast far and wide what kind of character he was. Then, after at least a year of therapy and prayer, she made a point of discussing the topic with me again. She confessed that she had smeared his name everywhere that she could find an audience. She realized that it was not healthy or appropriate for her to defame him.

To be clear, neither of these women wanted to cover up or deny their hurt. Neither wanted to sweep away their ex-partners' personal responsibility for any actions those partners had done or faults those partners had not tempered. Each woman did realize the power of words to harm as well as bless. May Jesus guide us as we use this power.

"I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven..." Jesus to his followers, recorded in Matthew 5:44-45

## Blessing

May we continually be blessed by Your offer  
to forgive us our transgressions;  
May that healing forgiveness wash through our hearts  
so that we can also forgive those who transgress against us.  
Bless them. As You deliver us from the temptation to curse,  
bless them, too.  
Amen.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
EP = Engagement Partner  
FP = Field Personnel

FPC = Child of Field Personnel  
PC = Pastoral Counselor  
S = CBF Staff Member

9 Sarah Roome, Greer, SC (CH)  
10 Javier Perez (S-CBF Global)  
10 Elliott Sample, 2004, San Francisco, CA (FPC)  
10 Nicholas Wright, Ft. Campbell, KY (CH)  
11 Robbie Byrd, Fayetteville, NC (PC)  
11 Rachel Greco (S-Georgia)  
11 Justin Murphy, Leesburg, FL (CH)  
11 Karen Rector, San Diego, CA (CH)  
12 Charline Berry, Baltimore, MD (CH)  
13 Stephanie Bohannon, Pinehurst, NC (CH)

13 Rodney Bolejack, Denton, TX (CH)  
13 Thomas Dougherty, Mechanicsville, VA (PC)  
13 Byron Greene, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
13 Wayne Maberry, Alturas, FL (CH)  
13 Johnny Taylor, Dallas, TX (CH)  
14 Kimberly Ferguson, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)  
14 Lou Ann Gilliam (S-North Carolina)  
14 Mike, Waco, TX (FP)  
15 Daniel Shadix, Prattville, AL (CH)

**AUGUST 16**

## **City Blessing**

**Allie Osborne**

*Minister of Missions and Children's  
Discipleship, Second Ponce de Leon  
Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia*



I was raised on a farm in the middle-of-nowhere Virginia where the grass was always green, the trees were so old and big they could provide shade for the whole yard and the stars were bright enough that we rarely needed the porchlight. Now I live in a city where bird chirps have been replaced by car horns, the artificial noise of the fountain in my courtyard drowns out the sound of any breeze and I haven't seen the stars in months. This is a blessing for the Holy Spirit to find us inside of our concrete buildings and parking lot traffic. For us to remember Christ's call to see each other and know each other, and for God's creation to find its way to us even when the beauty of nature feels so far.

### **A Blessing for People Who Never Get to See the Stars**

God of...all of THIS,  
I ask for your blessing  
Bless this space  
Bless these people  
Bless this moment in my day

When solitude is found surrounded by strangers  
In the coffee shop  
On a walk through the park  
In a crowded movie theater

Bless the thousands of faces that I lay eyes on every day  
Bless their families, their jobs  
Bless their morning routine, their conflict with friends  
Remind them to drink water today

Bless the cars as they drive by  
As I wonder about each driver and their story  
Where are they going and who is waiting for them to get there?

Bless the smells of this city  
Or better yet, bless my poor nose

Bless the rain that washes the sidewalks clean  
Bless the breeze that cools us down  
Bless that one tree that spits sap on my car in the church parking lot

In moments when I feel so far from you, God...  
I wish I could look at the stars and see you there

I wish the rain soaked into the ground  
Instead of running into the sewer  
I wish I could walk outside and be completely alone with you

Thank you for this city and all its lights  
For the confidence it takes to be yourself in a crowd

Bless the overwhelming moments  
And the moments of relief  
Bless the intentionality of community here

When there are so many places to be, Lord  
Bless each moment I spend with you  
And all these people here with me  
Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

16 Don McNeely, Emeritus (FP)  
18 Anyra Cano (S-Fellowship Southwest)  
18 Peggy Foskett (S-Kentucky)  
18 Thomas Riley, Wilson, NC (CH)  
20 Joyce Cleary, Emeritus (FP)  
20 Jim Ivey, New Albany, IN (CH)  
20 Sharon Spivey, Wilmington, NC (CH)  
21 Inetta Riddell, Rochester, MN (CH)

21 Lara Tew, Cape Girardeau, MO (CH)  
21 Alice Tremaine, Corbin, KY (CH)  
22 Sharondalyn Dupree, Sacramento, CA (CH)  
22 Daniel Hix, Maryville, TN (CH)  
22 William Thompson, Los Alamitos, CA (CH)  
22 Bradley Boberg (S-CBF Global)  
22 Mark Wagner, Vashon, WA, (CH)

**AUGUST 23**

## **Blessing for Hope**

**Annette Ellard**

*Field Personnel in Louisville, Kentucky*



### **Romans 15:13**

Now, may the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with Hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout nearly 20 years of ministry among the Karen and other refugees from Burma, a few key scriptures have guided, shaped and defined our ministry. But it was Romans 15:13 that came as a surprise and a blessing.

I was having trouble connecting to the Wi-Fi at Crescent Hill Baptist Church, which provided the space for Hope Academy, a small school we operated from 2011 through 2013 to help struggling Karen refugees from Burma finish high school. When someone set a new password for Hope Academy to use to connect, they chose Romans 15:13.

One day, when we had lost the connection and I had to reenter the password, it occurred to me that it might be a scripture passage, so I looked it up. Somehow, it seemed as though I was seeing the passage for the first time. I shared it with the class, and we memorized it. It was thoughtful that someone had incorporated the theme of our school into the password, but it was more than that. We would claim it as a blessing.

It was late autumn, and my students had been producing art for a series of Christmas cards to be sold as a fundraiser for the school. We had been considering what kind of Christmas greeting to include and this scripture would be perfect, both for capturing the spirit of the season and the spirit of the school. We would share the blessing we had received with others.

Over the years, this Blessing of Hope has stuck with me and the passage has come to me again and again. But it was on a sunny summer day, standing at the graveside of a small Karen child, that God sent it to me as a benediction. A benediction is often thought of as a blessing at the end of worship; but rather than marking the end of something, benedictions signal a transition. Benedictions are literally “good words”

that serve to ground us in the promises of God and remind us of our purpose before we step out into an often chaotic and oh so unpredictable world.

The little girl had been hit by a car while playing hide-and-seek with her cousins. Her parents, both Buddhist, shared how the five-year-old loved to sing God songs. Because she loved God, they said, they wanted her to have a Christian funeral and burial, but they didn't know what to do. Could we make it for them, please.

It was the first funeral I had been so involved in, and after the funeral and graveside service, my energy was spent. Finally, when the burial was complete, the family and other mourners stood motionless by the grave. I, too, felt paralyzed by the weight of the moment. How could these parents— how could any of us—move on?

Then, suddenly inspired, I lifted my hands into the air and declared,

## Blessing of Hope

“Now, may the God of Hope  
fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,  
so that you may overflow with Hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.”  
Amen.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
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S = CBF Staff Member

23 Mike Bumgarner, Norman, OK (CH)  
23 Keith Little, New Bern, NC (CH)  
23 Daniel Prada, Davie, FL (CH)  
23 Allen Williams, Emeritus (FP)  
23 Marc Wyatt, Emeritus (FP)  
24 Timothy Boschen, Waynesboro, VA (CH)  
24 Craig Klempnauer, Hewitt, TX (CH)  
24 Brian Wilson, Louisville, KY (CH)  
25 Arville Earl, Emeritus (FP)  
25 Robert McMillan, Oklahoma City, OK (CH)  
25 Megan Pike, La Crosse, WI (CH)

26 LaToya McLean, Wilmington, NC (CH)  
26 Cindy Ruble, Emeritus (FP)  
27 Jim Kirkendall, Biloxi, MS (CH)  
27 Verr Dean Williams, Emeritus (FP)  
28 Sarah Greenfield, Washington, DC (CH)  
28 Penny Hoey, Greenville, NC (CH)  
28 David Morrell, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
28 Randal Walton, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
29 Robert Blackwood, St. Petersburg, FL (CH)  
29 Pam Foster, Haslet, TX (CH)  
29 Blake Strother, Durham, NC (CH)

**AUGUST 30**

## **For Labors of Community**

**Suzie**

*Field Personnel in Southeast Asia*



As I walk alongside the Asia Team field personnel and the beautiful ministries and people they are called to serve, my desire is for God to be glorified and for those of us who serve to remember that all our efforts cannot compare with God's glory. It is He who has called us and He who is at work in and through us. And it is He who we desire to be made known among the nations.

### **A Blessing for Our Labors of Community**

Adapted from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 1* by Douglas Kaine McKelvey

Bless our small lives, Oh Lord. Our vision is so limited.

Our courage is so frail. Our hours are so fleeting.

Bless us with your grace and guidance for the journey ahead.

Our Asia team is called together into a work that we cannot yet know the fullness of.

Bless us, Oh Lord, help us to remember, to trust Your voice, the One who has called us.

And so we offer to you, Oh God, these things:

Our dreams, our plans, our vision, our strategies.

Shape them, Oh Lord, as YOU will—our moments, gifts and calling.

Bless them, Oh Lord, toward bright, eternal ends.

Richly bless the work before us, Father.

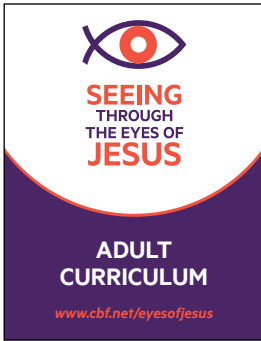
Let us listen for Your voice. Unite Your people and multiply our meager offerings, Oh Lord, that all may resound to your glory. We want our love and our labors to echo your labors, Oh Lord.

Oh Spirit of God, bless our feeble hearts.

Oh Spirit of God, bless our busy hands.

Oh Spirit of God, bless your kingdom among us.

Amen.



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Seeing Through the Eyes of Jesus

[www.cbf.net/eyesofjesus](http://www.cbf.net/eyesofjesus)

### Curriculum to Refocus Our Christian Faith

*Seeing Through the Eyes of Jesus* calls us back to the central focus of our Christian faith, the Risen and Living Jesus! This resource invites congregations into deeper faithfulness with each other, equips congregations to offer a bold and positive witness to the risen Jesus and transforms us individually and corporately while we co-labor with God to transform the world.

Adult, youth, children and Lenten curriculum is available, accompanied by a set of compelling videos.

## Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain  
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30 Teresa Darnell, Louisville, TN (CH)  
30 Christiana Liem, Houston, TX (CH)  
30 Stacey Painter, Charleston, SC (CH)  
31 Karr La Dickens, Emeritus (FP)  
31 Marie Gordon, San Antonio, TX (CH)  
31 Barbara Miller, Clarksburg, WV (CH)  
31 Cecelia Walker, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
1 Reginald Bradley, San Francisco, CA (CH)  
1 Julie Cadenhead, Pensacola, FL (CH)  
1 Terry Eddinger, Winston-Salem, NC (CH-Ret.)  
1 Lucy Hearne, 2013, Danville, VA (FPC)  
1 Bisser Ovcharov, Houston, TX (CH)  
1 Ralph Stocks, Emeritus (FP)  
2 Dennis McDuffie, Atoka, TN (CH)

2 Sara Moran, Greer, SC (CH)  
3 Jenny Jenkins, Emeritus (FP)  
3 Ann Owen, Viera, FL (CH)  
3 Duane Powell (S-CBF Global)  
4 Vicki Lumpkin, Greensboro, NC (CH)  
4 Shirley Massey, Chapel Hill, NC (CH)  
5 Eddie Aldape, Spain (FP)  
5 Kelly Belcher, Asheville, NC (CH-Ret.)  
5 Roger Benimoff, Grand Prairie, TX (CH)  
5 Becky Brannon, Gainesville, GA (CH)  
5 David Brown, Emeritus (FP)  
5 David D'Amico, Emeritus (FP)  
5 Alexandria Geovanni, Lake Charles, LA (CH)

SEPTEMBER 6

## Blessings from Antwerp

*Janée Angel*

*Field Personnel in Antwerp, Belgium*



Our daily engagement is with the Middle Eastern world inside the Belgian context. Our streets are filled with headscarves and the smells of fresh flat bread and spices. We see and feel the unrest throughout the region we serve and how that affects the city we live in. Our purposeful response to all that we see, hear and feel is prayer. Prayer changes things. It was wisely said that “prayer does not lead us to the greater work; prayer IS the greater work. Prayer is precious to the Father. In fact, it is one of the two things that scripture says that He collects—our prayers and our tears.

I love to pray the prayers that agree with the heart of God. So I pray scripture every day. Prayer is also a way to bless the people and bless the land. When we want God’s best for those around us, we are loving our neighbor with agape love. We are blessing them with the desire God has for each life.

Daniel was a man of prayer. In chapter 9:17-19 it says, “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

### **Blessing**

Because of the mercy of God, be blessed by His presence among us.

Be blessed by his heart for each people and each land.

Be blessed because we are His.

Be blessed because He hears and listens.

Be blessed with His favor because we bear His name.

We are blessed because in turbulent times, we can wait on God; the only One who can offer peace and calm to the storms around us.

When our eyes cannot see the outcome that we desire, we are blessed because we can trust in the One who is working things out and will make all things new.

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6 Valerie Caldwell, Stone Mountain, GA (CH)  
6 Carla Cherry, Worthington, OH (CH)  
6 Ellen Di Giosia (S-Texas)  
6 Tyler Johnson, Birmingham, AL (CH)  
6 David Stone (S-North Carolina)  
6 Daniel Edward Tatum, Marietta, GA (CH)  
7 Martha Harper, Madison, MS (CH)  
7 Lee Hendricks, Greenville, NC (CH)  
7 Lita Sample, San Francisco Bay Area, CA (FP)  
8 Renee Edington, Lexington, KY (CH)  
8 Daniel Hall, Pineville, KY (CH)

8 Jody Harrison, Dallas, TX (CH)  
8 Chad Mustain, Dallas, TX (CH)  
8 Kristen Pierce, Lilburn, GA (CH)  
9 Brett Barber, Durham, NC (CH)  
9 Rhonda James-Jones, Hiram, GA (CH)  
10 Tashara Boochee, San Francisco, CA (CH)  
10 Nancy Campbell, Kansas City, MO (CH)  
10 Sarah Montoya, San Francisco, CA (CH)  
11 Courtney Hester, Jacksonville, GA (CH)  
11 Larry Hovis (S-North Carolina)  
12 Bryan Lake, Cumming, GA (CH)

SEPTEMBER 13

## May You Grasp the Love of Christ

**Kathy Fraley**

*Layperson, Faith Baptist Church, Georgetown, Kentucky*



### **Ephesians 3:16-19**

I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Having just returned from a mission trip to Armenia; I continually think about the people I met each day I was there. Two other women traveled with me to minister to women through sharing our testimonies and teaching spiritual gifts. We also shared groceries with families who had lost loved ones in the Armenian/Azeri conflict that broke out in 2020.

At each of the women's conferences held in two separate Baptist churches, several women expressed their gratefulness for our teaching about spiritual gifts. The families who received the food also expressed their gratitude. One woman told us she had lost hope when her husband was killed in the conflict. With our visit, she was encouraged to trust God and learn more about the Gospel.

I knew nothing about Armenia or its people. As I prepared for the trip, I learned that Armenia considers itself to be a Christian nation, with the Apostolic Church closely tied to Armenian identity and is de facto the state church. Even so, many people do not attend the Apostolic Church or any church. I have often thought of Paul's blessing to the Ephesians as I have reflected about the people in Armenia. I pray that "Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. That they may have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses all knowledge."

Being so thankful for safe travels and learning about a new culture filled with hospitable and kind people, I, of course, was ready to share my Armenian experience with my family.

What did you eat? How did the women at each conference respond? Was your hotel safe and comfortable? Did you see any of the sites of the country? As I excitedly answered my family's questions, I again thought of Paul's blessing. My earnest desire for each one of my family is that God "may strengthen you with power through God's spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. That you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ."

## Blessing for Grasping God's Love

May you this day  
grasp how wide,  
and long,  
and high,  
and deep,  
God's love is for you.  
May you listen to others  
in love,  
and speak  
in love,  
so they will know  
how beloved they are.  
Thank you, God  
for your  
bounteous,  
unending  
love.  
Amen.

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13 Scot McCosh, Fayetteville, NC (CH)  
13 Richard Morris, Lebanon, PA (CH)  
13 Kathy Turner, Charlotte, NC (CH)  
14 Hephzibah James Chetepally, Augusta, GA  
(CH)  
14 Bart Grooms, Birmingham, AL (PC)  
14 Priscilla Howick, Jacksonville, FL (CH)  
15 Brandy Mullins, Manvel, TX (CH)  
16 Dick Allison, Hattiesburg, MS (CH)  
16 Matthew Dinkins, Matthews, NC (CH)  
16 Jeff Ellison, Heath, TX (CH)  
16 Debbie Haag (S-South Carolina)  
16 Karen Heistand, Rochester, MN (CH)

16 Byron Johnson, Paris Island, SC (CH)  
17 Angela Clark, Matthews, NC (CH)  
17 Jean Craddock, Lexington, KY (PC)  
17 Tammy Latimer, Springfield, MO (CH)  
17 Elket Rodriguez, U.S.-Mexico border (S-CBF  
Global)  
17 George Rossi, Charleston, SC (CH)  
17 I. Malik Saafir, Nashville, TN (CH)  
18 Mark Johnston, Augusta, GA (CH)  
18 Jenni Summer Shannon (S-Kentucky)  
19 Brittany Kohan, Pittsboro, NC (CH)  
19 Cari Willis, Benson, NC (CH)

SEPTEMBER 20

## Blessed to Bless Others

*Shelah Acker*

*Field Personnel in Kampala, Uganda*



Psalm 67 had a profound impact on me during my days at seminary. It changed my perspective about God's blessings and intense desire for the praise of the nations. We are blessed for the purpose of shining God's light to the nations. We are never blessed in isolation. We are blessed to bless others, so the nations will see God's glory and give praise to Him. In Uganda, we have the privilege of serving many nations in people who have come to Uganda as refugees. As God blesses us, our prayer is that this blessing will be a light to the peoples with whom we serve, so they may know God and give Him glory and praise.

### **Psalm 67:1-7**

“May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face shine on us  
so that your ways may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.  
May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations of the earth.  
May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
The land yields its harvest;  
God, our God, blesses us.  
May God bless us still,  
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.”



# CBF Resources for Churches and Leaders

## Offering for Global Missions Week of Prayer

[www.cbf.net/week-of-prayer](http://www.cbf.net/week-of-prayer)

### Support CBF field personnel through prayer

Your prayers sustain the work of CBF field personnel across the globe. You can join others in praying for the Offering for Global Missions during CBF's annual Week of Prayer.

Learn more about the ministries of CBF field personnel and explore specific ways to pray using our Week of Prayer bulletin insert and other resources.

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20 David Bluford, Lenoir City, TN (CH)  
 20 Heidi Dechow, Salisbury, NC (CH)  
 20 Katherine Moneypenny, Douglas, GA (CH)  
 20 Renee Owen (S-CBF Global)  
 20 Adam Ridenhour, Winston Salem, NC (CH)  
 21 Mark Flores, Lynchburg, VA (CH)  
 21 Finnley Ramirez, 2019, Philippines (FPC)  
 22 Kim Chafee, Virginia Beach, VA (CH)  
 22 Josh Reglin, Tahoka, TX (CH)  
 22 Becky Shoaf, Atlanta, GA (CH)  
 23 Donna Seay, Baltimore, MD (CH)  
 24 Chad Cooper, Holt, MO (CH)  
 24 Phineas Marr, New Orleans, LA (CH)  
 24 Laura Popa, Saginaw, MI (CH)  
 24 Juniper Ramirez, 2015, Philippines (FPC)

24 William Stewart, Norfolk, VA (CH)  
 25 Durrell Brown, Powder Springs, GA (CH)  
 25 Brianna Karpowich, Durham, NC (CH)  
 25 Angel Pittman, Emeritus (FP)  
 26 Randy Brookshire, Greenville, SC (CH)  
 26 Sunny Mitchell, New London, CT (CH)  
 26 Keith Parker, Brevard, NC (PC)  
 26 Beth Sexton, Lincolnton, NC (CH)  
 26 Lynwood Walters, Gainesville, FL (CH)  
 26 Jeffrey Walton, Richmond, VA (CH)  
 26 Gloria White, Pearland, TX (PC)  
 27 Cathy Anderson, Kennesaw, GA (CH)  
 27 Nicole Farrar, Norfolk, VA, (CH)  
 27 Peggy Johnson, Hurst, TX (CH)



Embracing  
Neighbors



Nurturing  
Hope

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