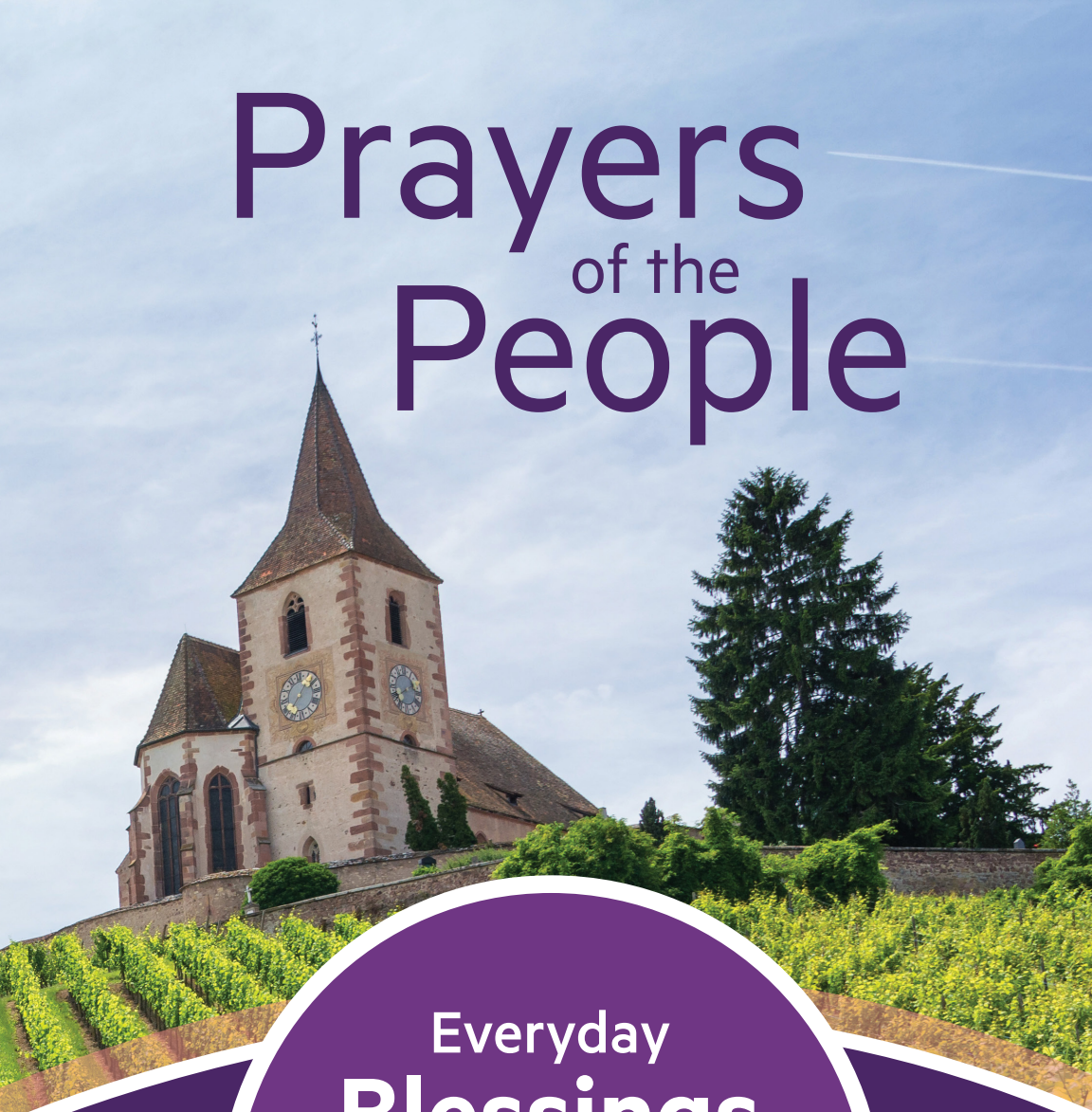
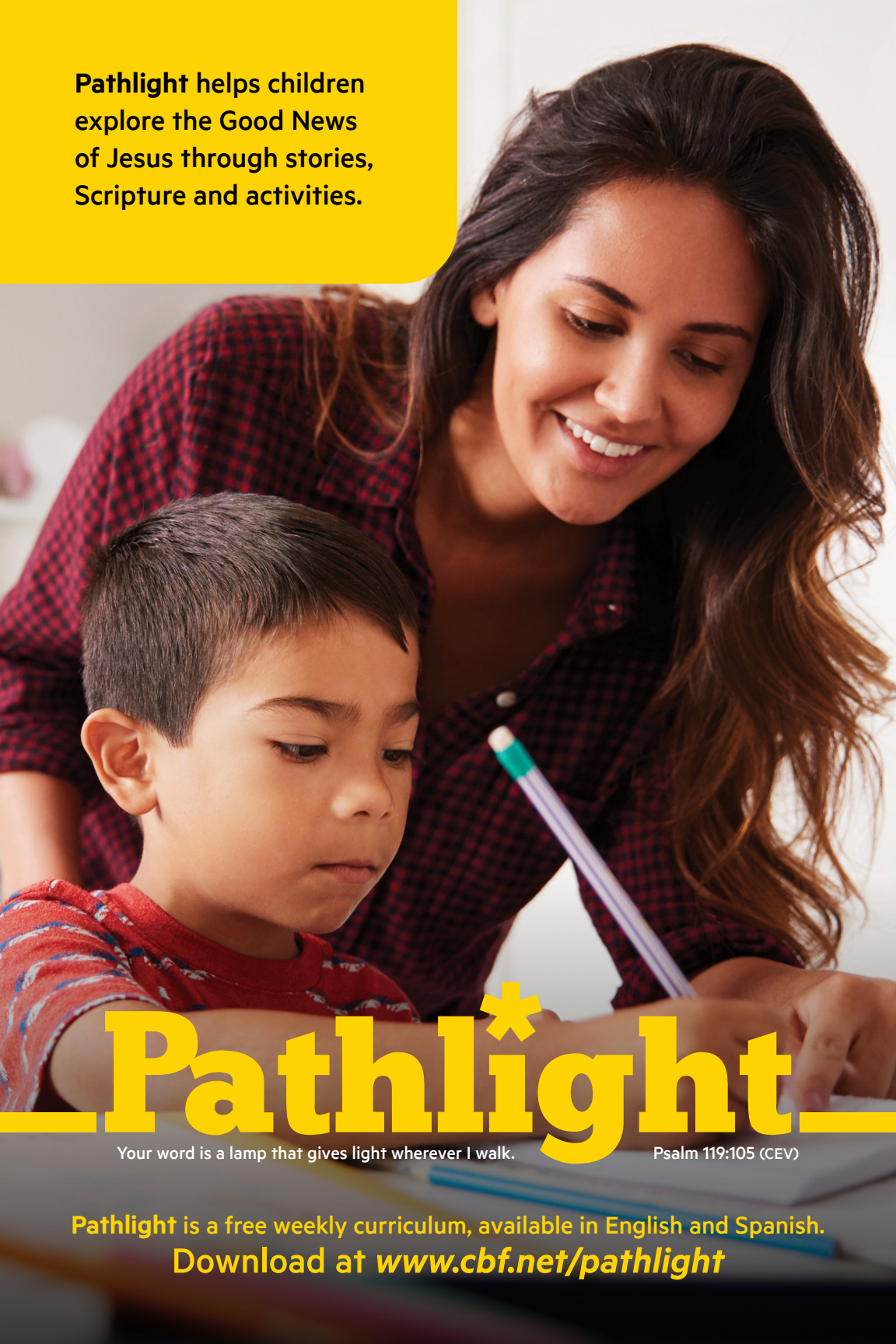
Prayers of the People



Everyday Blessings

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

2026-2027


Pathlight helps children explore the Good News of Jesus through stories, Scripture and activities.
Pathlight
Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk. Psalm 119:105 (CEV)
Pathlight is a free weekly curriculum, available in English and Spanish.
Download at *www.cbf.net/pathlight*



JOIN IN!

Led by the love of Christ, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship invites individuals and churches to partner in transforming God's world, working together as a global community to spread good news, justice and hope through impactful ministries, missions and resources.

GIVE TODAY!

www.cbf.net/give

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 a 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*** for more information about this free weekly download.

To Order More

Visit *www.cbf.net/ogm-order-form* or contact CBF at 800-352-8741 to order more copies of *Prayers of the People.* Include in welcome packets and display on magazine racks.

Welcome



Meg Lacy

Editor, Prayers of the People

As I pen the words of this welcome, I am in the final weeks of my first pregnancy. Throughout my pregnancy journey, I have been surprised (and delighted!) at the seemingly random prayers that have unexpectedly come to mind to pray for this little one growing inside me. Some are prayers I memorized in childhood that I thought I had long forgotten; others are table prayers said before meals; or prayers from Scriptures and hymns. Over the past few months, I have found myself repeating again and again the familiar words I often used as a benediction for my congregation when I was a pastor, but this time for the little one in my womb:

May the Lord bless you and keep you
May the Lord make His face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you.
May God give you the grace not to sell yourself short,
The grace to risk something big for something good,
The grace to remember the world is too dangerous for anything but truth
and too small for anything but love.
(Attributed to the Rev. William Sloane Coffin)

This year's Prayers of the People is all about these kinds of prayers: the everyday prayers that get stuck in our minds and hearts and become a part of the liturgy of our lives, sometimes without our even knowing it. I have enjoyed reading this year's submissions, which include everything from prayers inspired by the Beatles to those directly from the Psalms. As you read these prayers from across our rich and wondrous Fellowship, my hope is that some of your own "everyday prayers" begin to resurface in your mind, that you take note of the simple prayers that guide and sustain you in moments of uncertainty, joy or despair. Over the course of this year, as we journey together through the prayer book, maybe even a few of these new prayers will sink into your heart and become a part of the prayerbook of your life.

In gratitude,

Meg

Themes

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

- **Simple Prayers for a Good Life** - A collection of short and simple prayers that act as a guide for us in the ordinary and dailiness of life.
- **Music as Prayer** - Prayers inspired by songs, whether they be the hymns of your childhood or the music on the radio.
- **Everyday Prayer Practices** - Simple prayer practices that can be folded into your everyday rhythm to deepen your prayer life.
- **Liturgical Prayers** - Prayers that resonate with the spiritual themes of Advent, Lent and Easter.
- **Prayers from Scripture** - Prayers inspired by Scripture.
- **Breath Prayers** - Brief prayers that can be prayed and repeated with the inhale and exhale of your breath.

About the Editor

Rev. Meg Lacy is a chaplain, speaker and yoga teacher who has served congregations and communities across the southeast. Meg received a BA in Religion and Sociology from Samford University and an M.Div. from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Meg lives in DFW with her growing family, and currently serves as staff chaplain for the Heart Center and Pediatric Heart Transplant Program at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. Meg leads spiritual retreats for congregations, women's groups and clergy.

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Advent
The Already and the Not Yet

Everyday prayers that reflect the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love, and help us look with anticipation toward the miracle of Christmas.

NOVEMBER 29
Practicing Hope



Phillip Scott Lee
Pediatric Hospital Staff Chaplain

I have the honor of serving as a hospital chaplain at a pediatric hospital. My role is a little different because I do not work directly with patients or their families. Instead, my role is to care for the staff who care for every family that comes through our doors. It is a role in which I have served for the last 10 years. Because I work with such a large and diverse group of people, I refer to myself as a "Walking Buddy." I strive to walk with each person, no matter their traditions or experiences, toward hope and healing, always making sure they do not walk alone.

My Walking Buddy philosophy has always been part of who I am, and it continues to grow. It also found deeper roots in the story of the paralyzed man and his four friends in the Gospel of Mark. If you are familiar with the story, Jesus is in town where everyone wants to see Him; He gathers the crowd in a house with no way in or out. Four friends bring someone they love who longs to experience healing. Unable to get inside, they climb onto the roof, tear a hole in it and lower their friend down before Jesus. Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven." People begin to complain, and Jesus asks, "Which is easier: to say your sins are forgiven, or to say get up and walk?" Then Jesus turns to the man and says, "Get up, take your mat, and go." The man walks out, healed spiritually and physically, and the people are astonished. Amen.

On my work badge, I wear a small round button that says, "Hope." This is what I practice, what I believe and what I pray for each day.

Prayer
Lord, I know there is always Hope. Sometimes it sits, sometimes it stands, sometimes it walks, sometimes it carries, sometimes it is carried and sometimes it tears the roof off. Help me to know, to do and to be open, available and present with those around me—to be an instrument of your Hope.

Ponder
As Advent begins, how can you practice hope?

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

Hope Has Companions

940+

CBF-endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors actively serving

They serve in hospitals, military units, prisons, hospices, colleges, counseling centers, retirement communities and other settings. Their ministry often resembles the hope described in this week's reflection: sitting, standing, walking, carrying and refusing to let another person walk alone.

PRAY THIS WEEK FOR:

- People facing illness, grief, separation or uncertainty
- Caregivers carrying the needs of others
- Chaplains and counselors offering compassionate presence
- Companions who help hope find a way into seemingly closed places

God of hope, walk with them all. Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
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PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

29 Paul Mullen, Clemmons, NC (CH)
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 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 6
Peace



Madison Watts

Associate Pastor for Families
Weatherly Heights Baptist Church
Huntsville, Alabama

John 14:27

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

When Jesus promised to send an advocate, the Holy Spirit, to his disciples, he reminded them that the peace he offers is not the placating kind the world offers. It rests in totality. It's ever present. It's within our grasp if only we turn our minds toward its message.

As one who tends to have an overactive imagination and can let my mind wander, especially as I lie in bed at night, this verse has become a prayer in those dark middle hours where you can feel the heaviness creep in. I'm reminded to turn to Jesus and let him handle the worries of tomorrow, for today has brought its own. Christ has left us with a spirit of peace and our hearts need not dwell on the things that cause us fear. As a new mom, these are numerous to me, especially as my family enters the toddling years with bonks on the head and watching that our daughter does not put literally everything straight into her mouth! Through every season before this one, there have always been reminders that I don't walk these paths alone. As a disciple of Jesus, he has left the Spirit of Peace with me, and I can leave with him the everyday worries. Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Your peace you leave with me; your peace you've given to me—not as the world gives; so let not my heart be troubled nor be afraid. I trust in you. Calm my mind and let me find my rest in you. Amen.

PRACTICE IT

A One-Minute Prayer for Peace

Place both feet on the floor or rest a hand over your heart. Breathe slowly.

INHALE: Christ, your peace is with me.

EXHALE: I release what I cannot carry.

INHALE: Your Spirit is near.

EXHALE: I release tomorrow.

Continue for one minute. Then name one worry before God without trying to solve it.

PRAY

Guard my heart and mind through this night. Let me rest in the peace you have already given. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

6 Charlotte Fonjungo (S-CBF Global)
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 Crystal Ham, Columbia, SC (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 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)
12 Taylor Mason (S-Florida/Caribbean Islands)

DECEMBER 13
Joy



Susan Deal

Administrative Coordinator and Facilitator for Women in Music Ministry
Polyphony Music Resources

Johnny Appleseed Prayer

Our twin granddaughters were three years old when their family came to live with us. Their parents had been through a heartbreaking experience that forced them out of their home; and in November of 2019, they moved in with us. There were many significant adjustments that had to be made in a very short amount of time. Even in the midst of that upheaval, we were deeply grateful that our church preschool welcomed these two precious girls into their classrooms mid-year, giving them a place to belong.

When they first moved in, we wanted to find a way to turn this unexpected season into something that felt like an adventure—especially for two three-year-olds. Dorothy and Adeline embraced their new preschool, where they learned and thrived and made new friends.

Dorothy's class had a simple ritual each day at snack time. They would begin quietly:

"Five little fingers here.
Five little fingers there.
Ten quiet fingers folded in prayer."

And then they would sing together the familiar Johnny Appleseed blessing:

"Oh, the Lord is good to me.
And so I thank the Lord
For giving me the things I need:
The sun and the rain and the apple seed.
The Lord is good to me.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen."

One day, Dorothy came home and shared this blessing with our family. It wasn't long before it became part of our own rhythm around the table. We would carefully

prepare our "10 quiet fingers," speaking softer and softer until our hands were folded in prayer—only to burst into loud, joyful singing: "O O O O OH! The Lord is good to me!" There was laughter every time, especially when Lucy, our chihuahua, joined in with her enthusiastic howling.

In a season that held so much uncertainty, we found ourselves singing our gratitude. And even now, as our family has grown, when our twin granddaughters, now 10, and their younger cousin, Thomas, gather with us, we still sing that same simple prayer when we come to the table.

With it etched into all of our memories, March 2020 ushered in a time of tremendous disruption. The world as we knew it seemed to unravel almost overnight. Schools closed. Churches went quiet. Grocery store shelves emptied. Ordinary routines—the ones we didn't even realize were holding us steady—suddenly disappeared. Isolation replaced connection, and the familiar rhythms of daily life gave way to questions we didn't know how to answer.

We had just begun to settle into a new normal as a family of six when everything shifted again.

Alongside the uncertainty surrounding our son's employment and their future, there was a deeper, more pervasive unknown—what would life look like now? How long would this last? What could we count on?

And yet, in the middle of all that unsteadiness, this small, childlike prayer became an anchor.

Each time we gathered around the table, we folded our hands and sang our way back to gratitude. The words were simple, but they grounded us in a deeper truth—that God was still providing, still present, still good. In those moments, we were quietly proclaiming what we longed to believe: that God would "fully satisfy every need… according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Another gift in that season came at the end of each day.

Bedtime with the twins followed a sacred order: a book for each girl, then three songs—always in the same sequence—"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Down in the Valley," and "You Are My Sunshine." Even now, those songs carry the weight of that time. After the lights were turned out, I would often linger a little longer and, from my phone, play a few Scripture lullabies. One of the girls' most requested songs was "The Peace of God," based on Philippians 4:6–7.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Or, as the song gently puts it:
"Don't you worry about anything.
instead, pray about everything.
Tell God what you need
and thank Him for all He has done.
And the peace of God, far beyond what we can understand,
will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus."

— *"Hidden in My Heart: A Lullaby Journey through Scripture, Vol II"*

Night after night, those words settled into the quiet. Looking back, I'm struck by how these everyday prayers—spoken, sung, repeated in ordinary moments—carried us. Around the table, at bedtime, in laughter and in uncertainty. They didn't remove the hardship, but they shaped how we walked through it. They reminded us, again and again, to turn toward gratitude. To name our needs. To trust that God was near. And, somehow, in the simplicity of folded hands and familiar songs, we found peace.

Ponder

This Advent, how can you practice gratitude in the face of uncertainty?

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

13 Rick Landon, Lexington, KY (PC)
13 Scott Lee, Snellville, GA (CH)
13 Frank Stillwell, Lexington, KY (PC)
13 Robin Sullens, Dallas, TX (PC)
15 Anna Anderson, Emeritus (FP)
15 James Close, Louisville, KY (CH)
15 Sheree Jones, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)
16 Lee Ann Rathbun, Austin, TX (CH)
16 Tom Sisson (S-South Carolina)
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 Kathryn Ashworth (S-North Carolina)
19 Bernard Morris, Chester, VA (CH)
19 James Palmer, Tampa, FL (CH)

DECEMBER 20
Created in Love



Karen Alford
Field Personnel in Togo, West Africa

My breath prayer over the past several months has been: "Seek yourself in Me; seek Me in yourself." It comes from the passage below by St. Teresa of Avila.

For me, it emerged during a season when so much felt beyond my control, both in my immediate surroundings and in the wider world. In that space, I also felt a distance from God, as though the connection I longed for and usually felt, had grown quiet or obscured. When I encountered this passage, something in my soul stirred: that the closeness I was searching for was not absent, only hidden. That recognition itself became a kind of homecoming.

Because that sense of connection can be fleeting, I return to this breath prayer as an anchor—praying it silently, one phrase on the inhale and one on the exhale. With each repetition, it becomes both a reminder and a gentle reorientation—a way of coming back into awareness of a presence that is already here. I've also found it meaningful to listen to it and sing it as a chant.

"Soul, you must seek yourself in Me
And Me, you must seek in yourself.
You were created for love—
Beautiful, gracious and thus
Painted within my heart.
Should you lose yourself, O my beloved,
Soul, you must seek yourself in Me.
But if perhaps you do not know
Where you may find Me,
Do not wander here and there.
If you wish to find Me,
You must seek Me within yourself."

—St. Teresa of Avila (tr. Raimon Panikkar)

Ponder
This Advent, how can Christ be born anew in your heart and your life?

PRACTICE IT

Christ Within, Christ Among Us

Rest one hand over your heart and open the other before you.

WITH THE HAND AT YOUR HEART, PRAY:
Christ, awaken me to your presence within.

WITH THE OPEN HAND, PRAY:
Christ, help me recognize your presence in others.

HOLD BOTH HANDS OPEN AND ASK:
What love are you bringing to birth in me?

Remain quiet for a few breaths. When you are ready, name one way you will carry that love into the world this week.

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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)
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 Robert Elkowitz, Cumming, GA (CH)
23 Steven Ivy, Indianapolis, IN (CH)
23 Hal Lee, Clinton, MS (CH)
23 Alisha Damron Seruyange (S-Alabama/Global)
23 Linda Strange, Denton, TX (CH)
24 Michael Carter, Dallas, TX (CH)
26 Freddy Hinson, Rocky River, OH (CH)
26 Haley Seanor, Birmingham, AL (CH)
26 Scottie Stamper, Charlotte, NC (CH)
26 Nicole Tota, Greenville, NC (CH)

DECEMBER 27
New Year's Blessing



Taylor Long

Pastoral Resident, First Baptist Greenville
Greenville, South Carolina

I first came across the Gaelic blessing below while sitting in the chapel of Bald Head Island. I was there on a road trip with my mom and sister, seeing all of the lighthouses of the North Carolina coast one summer. Bald Head was our final stop on this coastal pilgrimage of sorts. As I sat in the chapel with my mom and sister by my side I reached into a pew seat to look at the hymnals and found this blessing inscribed on each hymnal. Since that time, those words "deep peace to you" have stayed with me. On that trip, we experienced deep soul peace by being together in our favorite place.

Now, this blessing is often how I greet my days and nights and the framework I have as I go about my days. It reminds me to look for the pockets of deep peace that nature so freely offers to us. Our world and days are busy; but the slow and steady rhythm of nature invites us to slow down and embrace the light of Christ that meets us each day and night, in light and darkness. So, in the year ahead, and in your everyday lives, may you find the deep peace of Christ.

Prayer

A Gaelic Blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you;
Deep peace of the flowing air to you;
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you;
Deep peace of the shining stars to you;
Deep peace of the gentle night to you;
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace of Christ,
Of Christ, Of Christ, the light of the world to you.
Deep peace of Christ to you.

PRACTICE IT

A New Year's Examen

Write one word or phrase for each.

RECEIVE: What gift from the past year do you want to carry forward with gratitude?

_____

RELEASE: What burden, disappointment or fear are you ready to place in God's care?

_____

REPAIR: Is there a relationship or responsibility to which you need to return?

_____

RENEW: Where do you long for God's deep peace in the year ahead?

_____

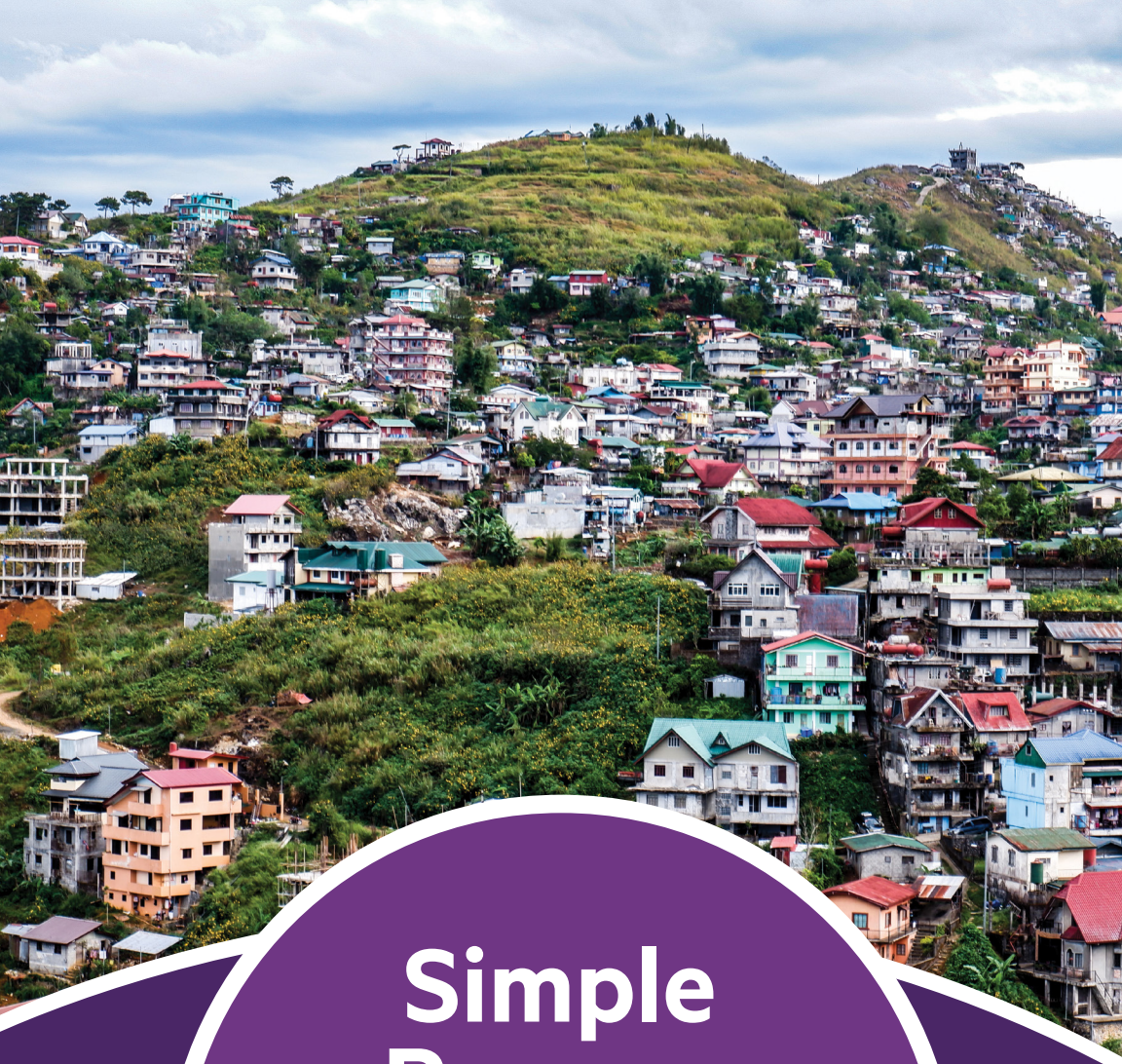
PRAY

God of every season, receive what I release, strengthen what I repair and renew me in your peace. Lead me with courage and gentleness into the year ahead. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

27 Larry Austin, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)
27 Steve Clark, Emeritus (FP)
27 Jonathan Madden, Cincinnati, OH (CH)
27 Sean Roberds (S-Mid-Atlantic)
27 Meghan Shinn, Dacula, GA (CH)
27 Solon Smith, Jackson, MS (CH)
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)
1 Christie Thadikonda, Richmond, VA (CH)
2 Emi Brand, Orlando, FL (CH)
2 Tammy Stocks, Emeritus (FP)



Simple Prayers for a Good Life

Simple prayers that guide and ground us in the everyday and ordinary times of ministry and life.

JANUARY 3
Mercy Remains



Bailey Thompson
StudentServe Intern

Simple Prayer
Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy.

This past year has been one of the hardest seasons of my life. It has held the grief of a close friendship ending, the heaviness of walking alongside people in deep mental health crises, the strange mixture of pride and loss that comes with graduating from graduate school and the persistent, unanswered question of what comes next. Many days, by the time evening arrived, I had nothing left to give. I felt mentally and spiritually drained, only able to take things one day (or moment) at a time.

In the middle of this exhaustion, my prayer life changed. The prayer "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy" was not something I grew up hearing. I first encountered it when I began attending a more liturgical church in seminary. At first, it felt unfamiliar, almost too brief, too repetitive. I wondered how just a few words could carry significant meaning. But as the months went on, and my own words grew fewer, this prayer began to feel like a gift.

There are days when I do not have the energy to explain myself to God. I cannot name what hurts or why, and even familiar prayers or Scripture feel heavy to hold. In those moments, "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy" becomes enough. This simple prayer rests on a deep truth: Christ meets us with mercy—not when we are polished or put together, but when all we can offer is our need. We do not have to earn God's closeness through the right words; Christ already knows our limits and still draws near.

I have also come to love how a community carries this prayer. I often hear it spoken during the Prayers of the People in worship, as together we name the pain of the world: grief, illness, violence, fear. The world is a frightening place, and so much of its brokenness is beyond our control. Saying these words together does not fix what is broken, but can ground us in truth. When our individual words fail, mercy can become our shared language, reminding us that we are not alone, and that God's compassion holds both the world and our faith.

Perhaps this prayer can become an invitation for you, too. On the days when words come easily, and especially on the days when they do not, you might return to this simple plea. This can remind us that prayer does not begin with our strength but with God's compassion, and even when we have nothing left to give, mercy remains.

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S = CBF Staff Member

3 Christopher Bowers, Powhatan, VA (PC)
3 William McCann, Madisonville, KY (CH)
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/S-North Carolina)
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, Columbus, OH (CH)

JANUARY 10
Show Me Where



Matt Norman

Field Personnel in Barcelona, Spain

Simple Prayer

Lord, show me where you are working, and help me discern how you are calling me or others to participate.

This is a quiet prayer that has found its way into the rhythm of my everyday life. It is not long or poetic, but it has become something like a compass to me.

This prayer has come to me over time. Early in life, my prayers were often filled with questions about what I should do, where I should go or how I could make an impact. Beneath those prayers, though sincere, was an assumption: that mission somehow began with me. That I needed to initiate, to bring, to build.

That assumption began to shift as I felt more called to ministry. I remember my first day stepping onto campus while working with international students in Toronto. I was nervous, unsure, quietly rehearsing how I might guide conversations toward faith. I was prepared with ideas, strategies, even a sense of responsibility. But before I could put any of that into practice, I met a student from China who approached me first. He was already asking questions—about meaning, about Scripture, about God.

In that moment, something within me gently unraveled. God was already at work.

That realization did not come as a dramatic revelation, but as a quiet reorientation. I began to see that mission is not something we bring into a place; it is something we are invited into. God is already present, already moving, already stirring in the lives of people and communities. My role—our role—is to notice, discern, walk alongside. So often we try to initiate, control and attempt to lead from the front.

It was out of this ongoing awakening that this simple prayer emerged.

“Lord, show me where you are working…”

This first line is a posture of humility. It acknowledges that I do not see everything, that my perspective is limited and that God’s activity often unfolds in ways I might

otherwise miss. It is a prayer that slows me down. It invites me to pay attention, to listen more deeply to the stories, struggles and hopes of the people around me.

"...and help me discern how you are calling me or others to participate."

This second line reminds me that participation in God's mission is shared. Sometimes I am invited to step in; other times, I am called to step back and recognize how others are already responding to God's movement in their own context. It is a prayer that resists urgency and instead leans into discernment. It asks not just what to do, but how to be present in ways that are faithful, attentive and relational.

This prayer has shaped how I understand mission. It has changed how I engage communities, how I listen and how I recognize the sacred in ordinary moments. It has taught me that God's work is rarely confined to the spaces we expect and that often, the most important thing we can do is simply be attentive enough to notice.

There is a passage that continues to anchor this prayer for me: "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working" (John 5:17-20). It is a reminder that God's activity is constant, unfolding in every place and in every life, even when we cannot immediately see it.

So, this remains my everyday prayer. It is very much a way of being. A quiet invitation to trust that God is already at work, and that I am being invited, again and again, to open my eyes to see, and in so doing, be transformed.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

10 Melody Harrell, Emeritus (FP)
10 Jill Zimmer, Columbia, TN (CH)
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)

JANUARY 17
Please God



Amy Jacober

Teacher Pastor, Harbor Church
Phoenix, Arizona

Simple Prayer

Please God

In rural Ghana, I saw the words “please God” mysteriously written into the dust on the side panel of a van. There was no context and no one fessed up to being the one who wrote it.

Those words stuck with me then and for the next few decades. It was difficult to tell through the dust what was intended. The ‘p’ in please was not capitalized. It looked both like a full sentence and an interruption. It was clear in the dust, but time had passed and the letters were filling in with newer dust. There was a smudge between the words. Hard to tell if it was a comma, a random mark or something else. It left the entire marking open for interpretation. It left the words open to interpretation for those who read them.

please God

Without a comma, this is an imperative. Just like the Ten Commandments, “please God” invites us to be fully focused on God, to find real rest in Sabbath. It is a commandment to please God in all I do and who I am. It is a commandment not to worry about what others think about how I look, where I am from, or what I say. It echoes the verses of my childhood I memorized but had not yet internalized, that I should work at all I do as if working for God and not for any other person (Colossians 3:23-24). This is both a daunting call and a comforting reality. God, and God alone, warrants my best.

please God—in all I say and do
please God—in interactions with my students and congregation
please God—as I advocate in the disability world
please God—while stewarding all I have

Read with the smudge in the dust as a comma, the sentiment is completely different, "please, God." The words become a plea, succinct words of desperation. They were the words I repeated when we didn't know if my firstborn would live. They were the words repeated when false accusations were made after I tried to protect others. They were the words I cried out in exhaustion caring for the activities of daily living of my parents, while raising young children and teaching theology to ministry students. They are the words I dare to whisper when considering the state of the world.

please, God—intervene
please, God—give me rest beyond the small number of hours I sleep
please, God—help others to see who you really are and not as the caricature being posted online
please, God—provide for my community
please, God—I can't go on anymore
please, God—help me please you

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17 Matthew Hanzelka, Round Rock, TX (CH)
17 Aaron Norman, 2005, Spain (FPC)
17 Glenn Norris, Sherwood, AR (CH)
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 Jake Maxwell, Little Rock, AR (CH)
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)

JANUARY 24

In My Heart, Jesus



Deborah Garrard

Executive Director and Lead Coach, be(e) well serve well, a nonprofit wellness initiative

Simple Prayer

In my heart, Jesus.

Every day. Every moment.

Va be levi, Yeshua. (Vah bay leh-vay, Yeshua)

Aramaic. The language of Jesus. Yeshua. Spoken in his home, by his parents, with his friends.

Jesus, the Nazarene. Jesus, the Essene.

"The Essenes dressed in white, lived as vegetarians, practiced an economy whereby everything was held in common, opposed the custom of animal sacrifice, took ritual baths, tilled the land, studied and copied the holy writings, interpreted dreams, were familiar with astrology and the prophetic sense, knew about herbs and crystals, and were outstanding healers."

Historians wrote of the Essenes as "true servants of peace." —*The Law of Light*, Lars Muhl

Jesus, the Essene. Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Va be levi, Yeshua. In my heart, Jesus.

I learned this prayer from the traveling monk, Brian Lottman.

Brian attended his first spiritual retreat in 2007. In 2012, he attended another retreat during which his mentor asked to see him privately. In a conversation lasting less than three minutes, his mentor asked Brian to leave his former life and set out on the road, sharing ancient wisdom, love and light.

Jesus called, and "immediately" they left their nets, they left their boat, they left their father. Behind. —Matthew 4:18-22

Brian was called. He returned home. He sold or gave away all of his possessions. He left his boat—his own successful finance business. He tells of envisioning himself as a little child, Jesus holding one hand, Mary holding the other. He followed, and he learned the prayer in Aramaic: Va be levi, Yeshua. In my heart, Jesus.

Now I whisper this prayer every day. I repeatedly chant this prayer every moment: my morning walk, Atlanta traffic, the line at the market, at my desk as I write and work, around the table, falling asleep each night.

Each syllable, a breath. Each breath, a prayer. Each prayer, a welcome peace: In my heart, Jesus. Prince of Peace.

Often as a child, sometimes as an adult, we hear the call of Christ. We invite Jesus into our hearts.

Va be levi, Yeshua. In my heart, Jesus.

Our prayer in the waters of baptism and in the waterfalls of life.

"Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

Come in today. Come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus." —Harry D. Clarke, 1924

Va be levi, Yeshua.

Every day. Every moment. In our hearts, Jesus.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." —Ephesians 3:17-21

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25 Mich, Emeritus (FP)
25 Chris Nagel, Houston, TX (CH)
26 Tina Hall, Manassas, VA (CH)
27 Darrell Bare, Charleston, SC (CH)
27 Tierney Boss (S-North Carolina)
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 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)

JANUARY 31

Thank you, Lord



Mary Van Rheenen

Field Personnel Emeritus

Simple Prayer

For health and strength and daily food,
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.
Amen.

I don't remember where in my 60-plus years of sojourning on this earth, I learned this song. It wasn't at home. Every time we gathered around the family table, my parents made sure someone prayed a blessing over the food before each meal and gave thanks for it after each meal. Many prayers were spoken; none were sung.

Wherever I learned it, for several years now I have sung it every morning. I set my breakfast on the table in front of the back window. I remain standing as I look out at the narrow oasis of our backyard, squeezed between the high wooden fences of our neighbors' yards and the brick of the surrounding Dutch townhouses, and I sing.

This daily practice helps keep my life in perspective. There is a Creator; the birds and trees outside the window are not some happy accident. This Creator cares for us. At the start of this day, I choose to acknowledge my humble place in creation and give thanks.

Mariela Santos

Layperson at Iglesia Bautista Emaús in the Dominican Republic and youth ministry coordinator for the Baptist Churches of the Dominican Republic



Simple Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for life, for a new day and for your faithfulness that never fails.

My daily prayer is born of simple encounters with God's creation. Every time I see the sun at the beginning of the day, my heart awakens to gratitude. Its light reminds me that God gives me a new chance to live, to start over and to move on. Without many words, I can only say: thank you.

When I contemplate the sea, my spirit is filled with wonder. At that moment, I remember what the psalmist says: "When I see the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you formed, I say, What is man that you should remember him, and the son of man that you should visit him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). These words help me to understand God's greatness and, at the same time, God's closeness. Though I am small before God's creation, I know that I am seen, loved and remembered.

In my daily life, I learn to stop, be grateful and recognize that everything comes from God, faithful and sovereign.

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31 Rebecca Adrian, Irving, TX (CH)
31 John Manuel, Fort Hood, TX (CH)
31 Paul Smith, San Diego, CA (CH)
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 Marilyn Buhlig, Liberty, MO (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 Rubén Ortiz (S-CBF Global)
5 Joanna Tarr, Kansas City, MO (CH)

FEBRUARY 7
Pass this Way



Kathy Hickel

Pastor, Church at Cactus
Peoria, Arizona

Simple Prayer

I shall pass this way but once; therefore, any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.

When I was a youngster growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, I remember my exceptionally creative mom teaching herself to cross-stitch. Her very first project was framed and placed on our dining room wall directly to my right as I would take my place at the table. It was a round table, each one of the four of us, Mom, Dad, my brother and I, having our specific place.

I remember being so proud of my Mom's tenacity to create such a lovely piece of art. I have always loved plants and animals, so it was pleasing to the eye, way before I had learned to read. The border was bright with bold colors of yarn defining the cutest animals of various species, altogether with vines of different types of plants connecting them all. Then, I learned to read.

Every time I would sit at our family table, I would look to my right and read:

I shall pass this way but once, therefore, any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.

Those words shaped me and became my mantra, a prayer. Both a desire to become and a grounding force to be nurtured. To this day, some 50 years later when I question, "Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing?" or "What is it that I am even doing?" Those words come flooding back—In essence—Do Good, Be Kind; we all just get this one fleeting life to live, this one life to join our Father in bringing His Kingdom here on Earth, as it is in Heaven.



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7 Xiomara Reboyras-Ortiz (S-Florida/Caribbean Islands/CBF Global)
7 Aundreya Shepherd, Leicester, NC (CH)
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, Tyler, TX (CH)



Lent Wilderness Prayers

Everyday prayers of lament and confession to guide us through times of uncertainty, injustice and spiritual darkness.

FEBRUARY 14
Navigating Uncertainty



Christine
Field Personnel in Africa/Middle East

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore, will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

—*"The Merton Prayer" from* Thoughts in Solitude *by Thomas Merton*

I got lucky somehow and grew up with a youth minister who introduced us to folks like Nouwen and Buechner and Bonhoeffer. We read Richard Rohr, Parker Palmer and Thomas Merton. My friends weren't reading most of these guys until seminary, or at least until college; but they had shaped my faith in the most formative years. Even then, I knew there was a richness and spiritual depth to be found in streams across the Christian tradition.

I have a vivid memory of lying on the deck one evening during summer youth camp, looking up into the night sky, surrounded by friends, the ones who knew me best, reflecting even then, on life and calling, wondering as you do at that age, what I'm doing. Am I making the right decision? What am I supposed to do next? And I can still hear the voice of my youth minister echoing the words of this prayer as he closed our evening vespers that night. "My Lord God, I do not know where I am going…but I believe my desire to please you, pleases you."

A decade later I sat in a hotel room down the street from the CBF offices in Decatur, drinking my morning coffee, preparing for a day of interviews at candidate conferences as I made my way through the long process of becoming field personnel. As I opened my email, I read these words again. Sent by a friend who had seen them in her morning prayers from the Northumbria community and passed them along as a reminder for me and as the prayer she was praying over me as I began what would be a life-altering day of conversations.

Over the last years of displacement, evacuations, uncertainty and reassignment I have found myself often whispering this prayer. Sometimes in silence, sometimes in a whisper, on rare brave days, perhaps a little louder. Recognizing the need to name longings, hopes, dreams, desires and also fears, worries, disappointment, the wonderings and the what ifs.

Did I get it wrong?
Why is it so hard?
I don't know if I'm getting it right, God. But I sure am trying my best to love you and to love the world you love.
These days I find myself holding tighter to the ending of this prayer.
I will trust you.
You are with me.
You will never leave me.

Merton knew something long ago that we all need to remember: The times we feel most unsure, when life feels uncertain and we feel unmoored and floundering, those are the days I hope we all cling to the promises that God is with us. Always. That God can never be anything other than faithful. That God will never leave us.

Luke Langston

Chaplain, Federal Bureau of Prisons
Federal Correctional Complex
Butner, North Carolina



Matthew 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

May I remember this today: It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

As a chaplain in a prison setting, I serve where there is no shortage of darkness. But the fact remains that there is no shortage of darkness outside of the prison either. So, this prayer is not denying nor dismissing the realities and challenges of darkness. But if I expend my best energy on pointing out and complaining about the darkness, I am simply left with more and more darkness. Therefore, today I choose to find a way to light a candle in the darkness in hopes of partnering with God in making this beautiful world…a little…bit…brighter.

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14 Roger Bolton, Conyers, GA (PC)
14 Charla Littell, Burlington, NC (CH)
14 Grace Martino-Suprice (S-CBF Global)
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 Pruett, Charlotte, NC (CH)
18 T Thomas, Emeritus (FP)
19 Karen O'Bannon, Louisville, KY (CH)
19 Leah Ryan, New Castle, VA (CH)
20 Amanda Ducksworth, Salt Lake City, UT (CH)
20 Younsoo Park, Leavenworth, KS (CH)

FEBRUARY 21

Cleanse My Heart



Emilio Bueno Santos

President, Juventud Bautista de la República Dominicana (JUBAREDO)
Dominican Republic

1 Peter 2:1-3

"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind, and like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up into salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

This passage reminds me that following Jesus also means letting go of what weighs on our hearts: anger, fear, pride, evil intentions and everything that separates us from God's peace. Peter invites us not only to leave those things behind, but also to deeply long for God's presence, just as a newborn baby needs nourishment to live and grow.

Often, in the midst of responsibilities, exhaustion or daily struggles, we forget that our soul also needs to be nourished. And that "pure spiritual milk" is time with God: His Word, prayer and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Every time we seek His presence, our minds are renewed, our hearts find rest and our faith is strengthened.

This has become a constant prayer in my life: asking God to cleanse my heart and never let me lose the desire to seek Him. After experiencing His goodness, we understand that nothing can fill the soul like His presence.

Prayer

Lord, help me to let go of everything that does not come from You and to always keep a heart willing to seek You. Nourish my life with Your truth and help me grow closer to You every day. Amen.

PRACTICE IT

A Lenten Exchange

Which exchange names the work God is doing in you now?

LAY DOWN	TAKE UP
malice	kindness
deceit	truth
hypocrisy	integrity
envy	gratitude
slander	words that bless

PRAY

Cleanse my heart, O God. Nourish what is good, truthful and loving in me and help me practice it today. Amen.

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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)
22 Stephanie McLeskey, Mars Hill, NC (CH)
23 Michelle Robinson, Columbia, SC (CH)
24 Edwin Badillo, Levittown, Puerto Rico (CH)
24 Laurel Cluthe, Pearland, TX (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)

FEBRUARY 28

Lord Jesus, Faithful Friend



Betzaida Rodriguez

Senior Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Berea
Yabucoa, Puerto Rico

Proverbs 18:24

"A man who has a friend should show himself a friend; and a friend is closer than a brother."

I have heard many people say, "I have no friends; I was let down, abandoned and alone." The experience of companionship is a great human need—to have someone who can listen, support and sustain us in difficult times, as well as someone with whom to share joys, achievements and life experiences.

This sentiment among people has led me to reflect, to observe people more closely, to ask the Lord and to pray for the companionship of good friends. True friendship involves important elements that must be present for it to be faithful and lasting: there must be respect, loyalty, trust and empathy.

Jesus cultivated close relationships, and it is extraordinary to know that He will always be willing to do so. His life teaches us to believe that fellowship is necessary to establish a spiritual communion that connects us with the divine. In the home of his friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus (Luke 10:38-42), He established a special relationship with them where he took time to offer comfort, teach, share as a family and listen to their needs. They enjoyed spiritual communion, which is an act of love in the presence of the Lord to surrender to Him and love Him.

When Jesus, the best friend, visits our lives, He fills us with peace, strength and comfort and renews us to carry on. In the midst of conflicts, He knows how to restore order and offers His wisdom so we can make the best decisions for everyone.

"Thank you, God, for your friendship, care, love, loyalty and compassion that you show in each of your visits. That you have shown yourself as a friend in my life strengthens me and drives me to greater efforts to fulfill your purposes, even when times are not as we had hoped. Having you in my life is the best thing that could have happened to me; you know how to listen to my heart, my sighs, my thoughts; you

understand my moments of fragility and do not judge me, but come to encourage me. You are my faithful, true and loving friend."

Allow the Lord to visit you and show Himself as a friend to you; you will see how the experience will change you, and you will feel that when others fail you, you will remain standing and with the strength to continue. Someone special and wonderful will be with you: Jesus.

Ponder:

If the Lord is interested in cultivating close relationships, why do I live in solitude?

Prayer:

Lord, I need Your friendship, Your companionship and Your tenderness so that my outlook may be different, even when my circumstances do not disappear entirely. If You are here, Lord, everything will be different for me.

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28 Amanda Adams, Jeffersonville, IN (CH)
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 Alex Hensley, Johnson City, TN (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 Sill, OK (CH)

MARCH 7
Keep Silence



Brittany and Casey Ramirez

Field Personnel in Baguio, Philippines

Habakkuk 2:20

"The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

I love that some memories can take you right back to a place. There is a hair product I used when we lived in Malaysia and if I use it now, I feel like I am there again. Songs can do the same thing. Somehow, I can still remember the words of songs I used to sing over and over again as a teenager.

But one song that takes me back is a song I only hear in Chinese. Zhu zai sheng dian zhong...The Lord is in his Holy Temple. The first time I heard this song was when I moved to China as a young adult. The page in my Chinese zan mei shi (hymnal) is still dog-eared. Every Sunday morning at Gan En Tang (Thanksgiving Church), we would sing it as we gathered for worship. This song of reverence comes from the book of Habakkuk.

I think the prophet's struggle with seeming silence from God in the face of so much pain and violence in the world is a message we can all relate to. As we see so much pain due to war, division, poverty and corruption within the Church and our own communities, we too can ask with the prophet, "O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?"

But I come back to that beautiful tune that takes me right back to my church family in China. I love the Chinese version which translates: The Lord is in the Temple, all people of the world before the Lord, shall be silent. I have a hard time being silent. While I refuse to be silent in the face of violence and injustice (as did Habakkuk), I do think we need the reminder to come before God in silence and remember that God is with us in the suffering. We are God's Temple; all peoples of the earth are God's image bearers. And when we come in reverence and remember God's promise and God's Spirit with us amid the suffering and injustice, we are given what we need to continue the ministry of hope and truth in our world.

So come, let us worship the God Who is never silent and Who is always with us.

Prayer

主在圣殿中 (zhu zai sheng dian zhong)
主在圣殿中 (zhu zai sheng dian zhong)
普天下的人 (pu tian xia de ren)
在主面前 (zai zhu mian qian)
都应当肃静 (dou ying dang su jing)
肃静，肃静 (su jing, su jing)
应当肃静 (ying dang su jing)
阿门 (a- men)

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence;
Let all the earth keep silence before Him—
Keep silence, keep silence before Him.
Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

7 Laura Foushee, Japan (FP)
7 Wade Rowatt, Louisville, KY (PC)
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 14
Light in Darkness



Kim Wyatt

Field Personnel in Raleigh, North Carolina

The contemporary Christian worship song titled "I Have Overcome the World" has become a daily mantra that I carry with me in my head and in my heart as I feel the fear of my refugee, asylum seeker and immigrant friends. The angst I feel is for the least in the world, who have had food and medicine withheld as USAID has shut down; for refugees who fear for their lives but have been prevented by the halted refugee program from coming to our shores; and for our neediest citizens, who are having help taken away. All these things cause me great sadness, disappointment and frustrated anger.

It is in these moments of frustration and deep sadness that the chorus of this song runs through my heart and my head. The words encourage me. They center me. They take me from the right now to the bigger picture—to what God sees and knows is true.

(Verse)
These things I have spoken unto you,
That in me you might find peace.
In the world you will have tribulation,
But be of good cheer, be of good cheer,
For I have overcome the world.

(Chorus)
Greater is He that is in me,
Greater is He that is in me,
Greater is He that is in me,
Than he that is in the world.

The words from this song come directly from scripture, the co-mingling of John 16:33 and 1 John 4:4:

"In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world." —John 16:33, *The Message*

"My dear children, you come from God and belong to God. You have already won a big victory over those false teachers, for the Spirit in you is far stronger than anything in the world." —1 John 4:4, *The Message*

Prayer

Lord,

In a world that feels heavy with fear, injustice and uncertainty, I come before You carrying so much grief for those who are suffering, anger at what feels so wrong and frustration at how little I can seem to change.

And yet, amid all this, Your words echo in my heart.
You have told me that in this world there will be tribulation, but also that You have overcome the world. Help me to hold both truths at once. Do not let me turn away from the suffering, but also do not let despair take root in me.

Remind me again and again that greater are You who live within me than anything I see around me.

Give me Your eyes to see the bigger picture, even when I am surrounded by what feels broken. Give me Your heart for "the least of these," and keep my spirit tender toward them.

Let Your peace dwell in me. May this not be a peace that ignores reality, but one that holds fast in the middle of it. And make me, in whatever small ways, a vessel of that peace in the world.

I trust that You are still at work, even here, even now.
In the mighty, holy name of Jesus.
Amen.

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15 Carita Brown, Catonsville, MD (CH)
15 Mary Van Rheenen, Emeritus (FP)
17 Byron Bell, Atlanta, GA (CH)
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, Vicenza, 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)

MARCH 21

A Prayer for Hope in Grief



Mina Podgaisky

Field Personnel in Krakow, Poland

Isaiah 61:3, NLT

"To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory."

Greetings from Black Mountain, N.C.!

Below is the daily prayer from my YouVersion devotional time. It has been prayed daily for over four years. I started praying it a few months after the invasion of Ukraine. It has brought me hope for over four years now.

A Prayer for Hope in Grief

God, I and millions of Ukrainians mourn.
Thank you for Your promise to give us a crown of beauty from the ashes.
Thank you for Your promise to turn my grief into joy.
Thank you for the festive praise You will give me and us instead of despair.
In times of sorrow and uncertainty in Ukraine and other parts of the world,
Help me trust in Your faithfulness and cling to Your hope.
Strengthen my heart to wait on You and Your promises,
Knowing joy is coming because of Jesus and the empty tomb.
Hosanna, He Lives!
Thank you for Your love,
Amen.

PRAY WITH THE FELLOWSHIP

Pray for Those Who Grieve in War

God of mercy, receive the cries of people whose homes, families and futures have been torn apart by war.

We pray for the people of Ukraine and for all communities living under violence.

We pray for refugees, displaced families and those who remain in danger.

We pray for neighbors who offer shelter, food, education and friendship.

We pray for peacemakers, pastors, chaplains and field personnel who accompany people through grief.

Do not let us rush grief or turn away from it. From ashes, bring signs of beauty. From mourning, awaken courage. From despair, kindle hope for the next faithful step. Amen.

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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)
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)



Eastertide

Everyday prayers that celebrate the large and small ways that the Kingdom of God is already in our midst.

MARCH 28
Road to Emmaus



Víctor Negrón Cintron

Puerto Rican Pastor and Ministry Leader associated with CBF Florida & The Caribbean Islands, Puerto Rico

Luke 24:29, NTV

"But they urged him, 'Stay with us tonight, since it's getting late.' So he went with them to their home."

On the dusty roads of the Middle East, two wounded hearts wandered aimlessly. It wasn't just physical exhaustion. It was the weight of the soul. They had seen their hope die, nailed to a cross. And though some voices whispered of life, they still walked in mourning.

Then, without warning or fanfare, a stranger became a companion to their sorrow. He walked at their pace. He listened to their pain. And in the midst of their apparent ignorance, he began to shine light where there was only confusion.

They did not recognize him...because pain often clouds one's vision.

As night fell, when the path grew uncertain, they insisted that he stay. They did not want to return to the darkness of solitude. And that simple gesture—an open table, a shared loaf of bread—became the threshold of eternity.

It was there, in the everyday...
In the stillness of a supper...
In the humble act of breaking bread...that their eyes were opened, and they understood that they had never walked alone.
The stranger was Jesus.
The Risen One did not reveal himself in the noise, but in intimacy. Not in the rush, but in the pause. Not in the crowd, but at the table.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to recognize you in the simple things.
May my home be a place of encounter with you.
May my table become an altar,
and my hospitality an invitation to Your presence.
Interrupt my routine if necessary;
interrupt my plans...
but do not pass me by.
Sit with me,
break the bread of my life,
and open my eyes.
So that, upon recognizing you,
my heart may burn again...
and my steps may not falter,
until I proclaim that You live.

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S = CBF Staff Member

28 Lynda Schupp, Corinth, TX (CH)
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 Wayde Pope, Crestview, FL (CH)
3 Mark Reece, Little Creek, VA (CH)
3 Wayne Sibley, Pineville, LA (CH)
3 Thomas Wicker, Salado, TX (CH)

APRIL 4
Parable of the Yeast



David Sánchez Colón

Pastor, Writer, Composer and Theology Student; Púlpito Fellows alumnus

Luke 13:20-21

"To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole batch was leavened."

Beloved Father, God of my soul: Will I be able to make the dough rise?

The Gospel of Luke records the parable of the yeast: "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole batch was leavened" (Luke 13:20-21). Matthew and Thomas preserve this brief saying that came from the lips of the Messiah; a text that, in none of its traditions, exceeds 30 words, yet holds immense power.

The parable of the yeast is small, just like what it announces. With just a few sentences, Jesus places a woman, a dough and some hidden yeast on the world's table; and from that peasant kitchen—without a palace, without a temple and without an army—He announces that the kingdom of God can begin in the smallest of things and end by leavening all of history.

For Jesus, yeast was like the Kingdom because change comes from within the dough. The woman mixed the flour and yeast, but it was God working in the small things that made the expansion possible. Where human eyes see only the ordinary, Christ reveals the hidden power of the transcendent.

Will I have the ability today to leaven the dough? Will the Church have the diversity of people, races, colors and perspectives necessary to expand the kingdom of God on earth? Will we be the leaven that transforms, with the power of God, the face of the earth? Or will we be just another organization, another club, another showcase of religiosity?

Prayer

Lord, my God, may my life be like the leaven that a woman placed among the flour of the nations.

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

Small Acts, Wide Reach

Small acts multiply through partnership. CBF's Global Missions 2025 impact reporting includes:

198
churches engaged in discipleship ministries

217
churches engaged in migration support and services

182
churches engaged in disaster response and emergencies

88
churches engaged in children and youth education

PRAY

God of hidden growth, bless every congregation, partner and neighbor whose quiet faithfulness helps communities flourish. Use what seems small in us to nourish life far beyond what we can see. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

4 Truett, 2011, Waco, TX (FPC)
5 Patrick Baxter, Atlanta, GA (CH)
5 Darcie Jones, Newnan, GA (CH)
5 Teri Moore (S-Georgia)
5 Eddy Ruble, Emeritus (FP)
6 Lauren Deer, Raleigh, NC (CH)
6 Steven Mills, Flat Rock, NC (CH)
6 Jeffrey Wright, Cartersville, GA (CH)
7 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 Scarlette Jasper, Corbin, KY (FP)
9 Alexis Johnson, Birmingham, AL (CH)
9 Jim Pruett, Charlotte, NC (PC)
9 Steve Vance, Charlotte, NC (CH)
10 Alan Rogers, Kaneohe, HI (CH)

APRIL 11
Sanctuary



Joanna Columbie

Pastor, Hospice Chaplain, Writer and Educator
Miami, Florida

> **Ezekiel 11:16**
> "Thus says the Lord God: Though I have cast you far away among the nations and scattered you throughout the lands, yet I will be a small sanctuary for you in the lands where you go."

During the Babylonian exile when the people of Israel had been scattered, the temple—which was the center of their spiritual life—was no longer accessible to them. In the midst of this, God gives them a surprising and unexpected promise: "I will be a small sanctuary for them in the lands where they go."

In this verse, God speaks to a people who cannot return, who are subjugated and uprooted and, instead of first promising them a return, He offers them something closer and sufficient—He promises them His presence.

For those of us who have emigrated, this promise holds special significance because exile is not only geographical but also spiritual; we live daily amidst visible and invisible borders, in that place where one feels that everything familiar has been left behind.

It is waking up in a place where the songs that shaped our faith are not sung, where houses never quite feel like home, where the language is learned with effort, where our affections are divided between here and there, and where often the church is far away or inaccessible, or time, work, or circumstances prevent us from reaching it.

But not all exiles are geographical. There are those who, without leaving their own country, experience processes of loss, rupture or change that leave them in a foreign land. When a relationship ends, when life takes an unexpected turn or when what was familiar ceases to be so, in those moments, too, we need God as our little sanctuary.

For it is precisely there that this promise comes to life, where God draws near without the need for walls, accompanying us through our struggles and becoming our "little

sanctuary"—not a building, but His very presence, the absolute certainty that He walks with us in our daily lives.

My daily prayer over the years has been: "Lord, be a little sanctuary for me when everything feels strange."

This prayer came to me little by little, during days when there was no time for long devotions, but there was an urgent need to feel God's closeness. Today it means spiritual refuge, but also mission; for it reminds me that if God is a sanctuary for me, then He can also be one for others through me.

And perhaps that is the hidden miracle of exile: knowing that God not only accompanies us and is our little sanctuary, but also transforms us into living little sanctuaries, carrying His presence to where others need refuge.

Ponder

If God is your little sanctuary, to whom could you offer refuge today through your life?

Prayer

Lord, be a little sanctuary for me when everything seems strange to me. Make me a refuge for others as well, in the midst of their own exiles. Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
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S = CBF Staff Member

11 Laura Broadwater, Louisville, KY (CH)
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/CBF 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)

APRIL 18

May I Not Pass You By



Diego Rivadeneira

Mobilization Leader for World Vision's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Editor and Facilitator of El Blog de Bernabé Latin America and Caribbean

Luke 10:33, NIV

"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him."

I don't remember exactly when this prayer began to accompany me. It wasn't born during a spiritual retreat or a particularly solemn moment. Rather, it took shape along the way: during workdays, in pastoral conversations, while covering humanitarian crises, in writing and while listening to stories marked by pain, migration, poverty, hunger or hope.

Over time, I discovered that one of my greatest temptations was not to stop believing, but to learn to walk by. To walk by suffering when it becomes part of the scenery. To walk by the news when there is too much of it. To walk by people when the schedule weighs more than compassion. To walk by even God, when faith becomes mere talk and ceases to touch real life.

That is why this prayer has become a kind of daily breath: "Lord Jesus, may I not walk past today." I say it when I start the day, when I write, when I review a story, when I enter a meeting, when I feel tired or when I discover that my heart is hardening. I don't always say it aloud. Sometimes I barely whisper it. But it realigns me.

The second part—"open my eyes, enlarge my table, and turn my steps"—reminds me that prayer does not seek only inner comfort. It also reorders our gaze, our space and our movements. It opens our eyes to see what we would prefer to ignore. It enlarges the table so that others may have a place. It turns our steps, as in the parable, toward the wounded person by the roadside.

This prayer does not fix the world. But it prevents me from living as if the world did not matter to me. It reminds me that following Jesus often begins with something simple yet difficult: stopping, looking, having compassion and drawing near.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, may I not pass You by today.
Open my eyes, set a bountiful table
and turn my steps toward those who need a neighbor. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

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)
19 Michael Lee, Hendersonville, NC (CH)
19 Zach Medlin, Salt Lake City, UT (CH)
20 Melissa Kessler (S-Virginia)
20 Susan Stephenson, Edmond, OK (CH)
22 Jason Cogdill (S-North Carolina)
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)

APRIL 25
Celtic Prayer



Jessica Hearne

Field Personnel in Danville, Virginia

For many years, my husband and I hosted a weekly prayer meeting in our living room on Sunday afternoons. The meeting was open to any who wished to come, and the group was often quite eclectic—young professionals, folks formerly or currently experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, parents with young children, retirees, people struggling with addictions. Every week we gathered to hug, to sing, to read Scripture and to pray with and for one another. At the end of each service, we would stand in a circle and join hands while reciting the blessing below, a blessing that came to us from another, much older intentional community on another continent.

The words of this blessing were particularly poignant for our group. This gathering of intentional community was uplifting and sustaining for us all, but we couldn't stay in it forever, and we said these words together knowing that we were going out into the world on our own, and that the strength of our bonds with one another would have to sustain us until we could gather again.

And so, we prayed. We prayed for peace with people who lived in abandoned houses, who feared police and dealers, who often didn't have enough to eat. We prayed for guidance as we all tried to navigate a world full of temptations and addictions, some more dangerous and damaging than others. We prayed that we might find the joy that is inherent in all of the creation, a joy that offers strength when the cares of the world are heavy. And finally, we prayed to be back together again, soon and safe.

We no longer hold weekly prayer meetings in our home, but this blessing comes back to me when I am in my community. I know that the peace of Christ is with us when we gather together in the garden, and that many of our leaders find joy and wonder in the creation that we nurture there. I pray for God's guidance when my friends are experiencing hardships: when the groceries don't last through the month, when medical bills make it difficult to pay for electricity, when there is violence in our neighborhoods. And of course, I continue to trust that we will be together again, soon and safe, to support one another and take joy in our mutual work.

Prayer

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.
May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.
May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.
May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

—"Celtic Daily Prayer from the Northumbria Community,"
credited as "Peter's Song for Marygate" by Peter Sutcliffe

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S = CBF Staff Member

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)
27 Pat Davis, Baton Rouge, LA (CH)
27 Pete Parks, Williamsburg, VA (CH)
28 Andrew Bowman, Wake Forest, NC (CH)
28 Gary McFarland, Charlotte, NC (PC)
29 Ted Dougherty, Winston-Salem, NC (PC)
30 Melissa Neal, Floyd, VA (CH)
30 Kenny Phillips (S-Florida/Caribbean Islands)
30 Charles Wallace, Fort Worth, TX (CH)
1 Michael Coggins, Navarre, FL (CH)

MAY 2

Prayer for the Displaced



Eddie Aldape

Field Personnel in Almeria, Spain

Psalm 91

"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."

About three months after arriving at our field assignment, we received a phone call early one Saturday morning asking if we had an emergency escape plan. The voice on the other end did not have a sense of urgency so I figured I would work on one during the week. Thirty minutes later a second call came asking if we were on our way to the airport. "We were on our way to the market," was my response, and that is when the voice of urgency came. We were to fly to Singapore as soon as possible, where someone would host us until further notice. We had never experienced the threat of possible war in our land and, although we were not in visible imminent danger, our stress levels went through the roof.

Since that experience, we have ministered to several families escaping actual war in their own backyards. They told us about the missiles flying over their homes and exploding near their location. "Warning sirens would sound at all times of the day and night," they said. Others shared about loved ones being arrested and taken to prison.

Places like Ukraine, Iraq, Iran, Guinea and Syria, to name a few, are places that are so far away from us that we don't have to worry about it coming near us. I never stopped to think that there were brothers and sisters in Christ in those areas. Colleagues and family members of some of my students are caught amid danger with some able to get out of harm's way and others that have to remain there and hope for the best.

Prayer

Almighty God, You are the Prince of Peace, our Comforter, our Defender and Protector and we pray for your presence to be with those in the midst of war or civil unrest. We ask for your deliverance and safety of the innocent in harm's way. Help us to be mindful of those who are suffering loss or are in danger. We claim your promises of protection for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are being your presence in these places of terror. May your name be glorified as we witness your mighty hand at work. Amen.

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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)
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)

MAY 9
Care for Immigrants



Angela Adamah

Graduate Student, Campbell University
Decatur, Georgia

Leviticus 19:33-34

"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

Moving to the United States for my husband's education is one of the most difficult challenges I've faced. Although living on a student visa has its restrictions, my family and I have found solace in the kindness of American friends who have become like family. They welcomed us into their homes during cold, lonely Christmas holidays. They prayed for us and supported us throughout the anxious pandemic period. In many ways, they embodied God's love and provision for us.

Following the news cycle, I recognize that not all immigrants have the privilege of experiencing the love and hospitality we've received. My heart breaks hearing stories of displaced and unknown dead immigrants in the desert, including children. Even those who cross into safety remain under the constant threat of deportation. Yet, while mourning the immigrant's plight, I also thank the sanctuary churches whose witness offers a different perspective from the documented-undocumented narrative, emphasizing the dignity of all persons made in God's image.

The prayer below expresses my intercession, lament, blessing and hopes for immigrants and the communities that welcome them.

Prayer

A Blessing for Immigrants and Host Communities

Dear God, guide the immigrant struggling through the scorching desert.
May your living water quench their parched tongues.
May you create a path for them through the sands.
May your Spirit breathe life into their breathless lungs.
May Christ, who calls us by name, remember the nameless fallen.
Bless the families that the immigrants have left behind.
Bless the country that they now call home.

Bless the sanctuary churches that use their privilege to serve justice,
Bless the work of our immigrant neighbors.
Bless the contribution they make to our communities.
May immigrants find a home in our homes, a community in our communities,
For in welcoming them, we welcome Christ and angelic hosts!

Carmen Waleska Lebron

Pastor, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Celada Gurabo, Puerto Rico



Exodus 3:7, PDT

"But the Lord said: I have seen how much my people have suffered in Egypt at the hands of their oppressors, and I have heard their cries. I am aware of their pain."

The wave of mass deportations our Hispanic brothers and sisters are experiencing in the U.S. mirrors situations others endure in other countries. As the Church of Christ, we join together to cry out against the pain others are experiencing so that they may receive the comfort and strength that only God can give us. The Scriptures present us with several examples of people who had to leave everything behind to seek new opportunities. Among them: Abraham and his family, Joseph, Jacob and his family, Moses, Naomi and Ruth, and Joseph and Mary, who fled with the child to Egypt to escape King Herod's persecution. In all these experiences, God's mighty hand was guiding and sustaining them. I invite you at this moment to pray the following prayer with me.

Prayer

Our Lord, we come before You in the name of Jesus, acknowledging that without Your help we can do absolutely nothing. You listen to the cries of Your sons and daughters who approach You with complete trust, asking for Your help. You know the problems that afflict all Your sons and daughters who find themselves in a foreign land and who face fears in the face of political changes.

We ask You, O God, to stretch out Your hand and impart strength, restoring joy and security to all our brothers and sisters abroad. They left everything behind—their homeland, their families—seeking better opportunities and stability in a distant land.

We ask You, Lord, to act today on behalf of our brothers and sisters, just as You did in the past for the people of Israel when they pleaded for Your help in Egypt.

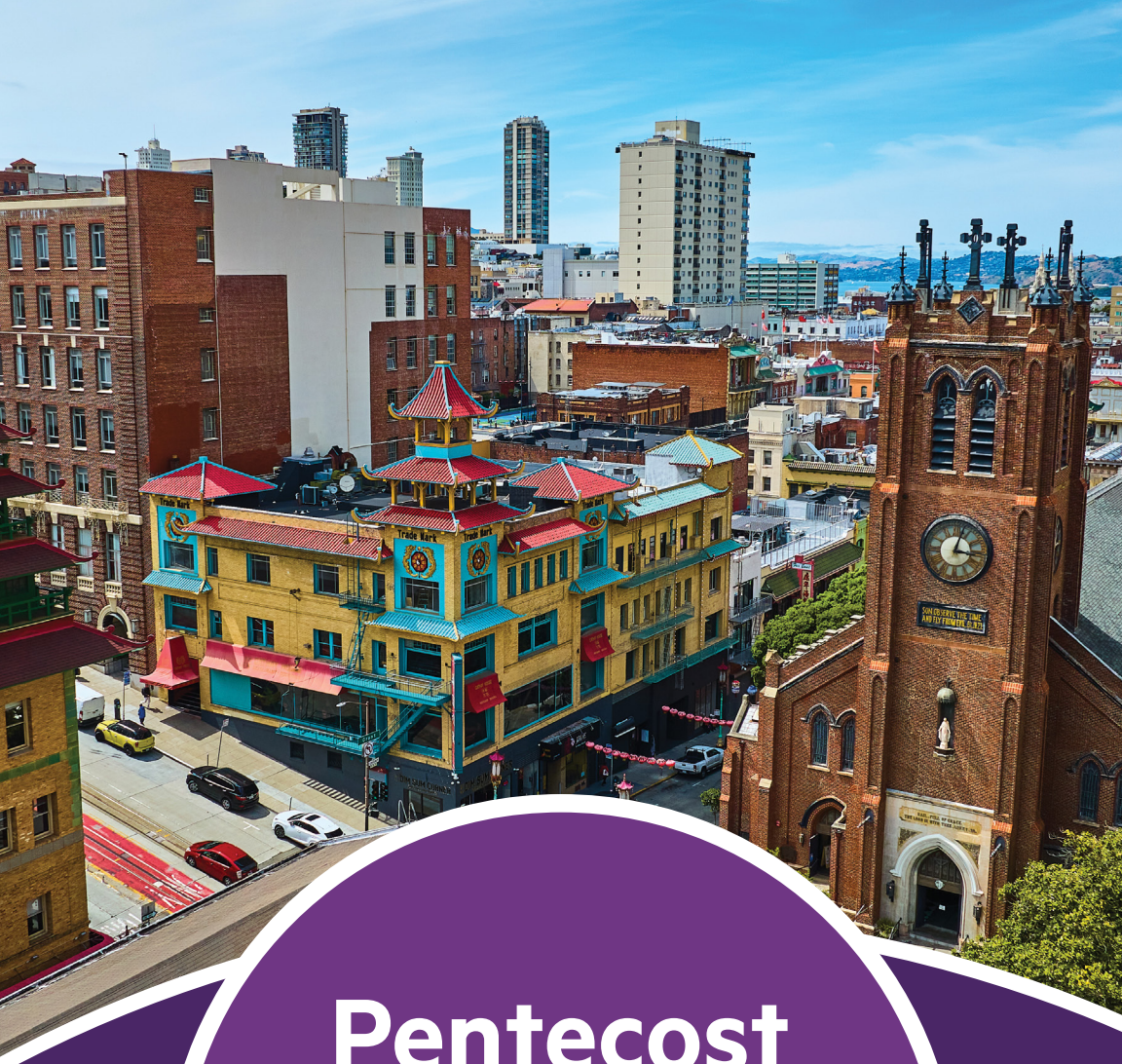
You, Lord, heard the Israelites' cries in the face of the cruelty and abuses committed against them for many years, and You brought justice.

We ask You at this hour to strengthen their faith in the midst of their crisis. Lord, we acknowledge that life is not and has not been easy for anyone. But through Your Word, we see that You are the God who engages with human history; You are the God who descends and draws near to the afflicted who cry out in desperation for Your swift help. Throughout the generations, we have seen that You restore hope to believe in You regardless of the circumstances; just as You acted in the past with the people of Israel, do so today. You are the God who dwells above in the heavens, but You also come down to act among people. Restore peace to the hearts of each of our foreign brothers and sisters and bring justice to each of them. We place this in Your hands, acknowledging Your power and lordship over all things, and knowing that You hear this prayer. In Jesus' name, 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 Rich Behers, Lakeland, FL (CH)
9 David Harding, Emeritus (FP)
9 Leigh Jackson, Austin, TX (CH)
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)



Pentecost
Practices of Prayer

Everyday prayer practices that help us live out our prayer in our daily lives.

MAY 16
Serenity Prayer



Edward Erwin

Navy Commander, CHC, USN, Naval Chaplaincy School
Newport, Rhode Island

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

As a Navy chaplain between deployments to faraway places and back again, I have learned over the years the importance of trusting in God. When I face enormous challenges that stretch me beyond my capacity to bounce back naturally on my own, I am reminded of a simple passage and foundational promise in Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. When I trust God with all my dreams and desires, I pray for God's best design. I ask that I not second-guess God and unwittingly petition myself out of God's best because I want the short-sighted gain instead of God's long-term awesome life for me and those I love and serve.

Am I the only one who struggles with the conflict between instant gratification and delayed gratification in my prayer life, between what I seek in my finite understanding and what I surrender to God's infinite knowledge of that "good, pleasing, and perfect will" for my life (Romans 12:2b)? I wish I were alone in this struggle but, based on my experiences, I know that we all share this common plight as members of the human race. To help keep my prayers lined up within the parameters of God's plan, I turn again and again to the age-long wisdom of Thomas à Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ*: O Lord, you know what is best for us, let this or that be done, as you will. Give what you will, and how much you will, and when you will (Contemporary English).

Colleagues and friends, whenever you become exhausted and discouraged in ministry, remember the inspirational philosophy of trust that we discover again in the Scriptures and from godly sages in the past. "In God I trust" (Psalm 56:11a). That philosophy of trust is captured beautifully in Reinhold Niebuhr's "The Serenity Prayer," which is admirably expressed in these unforgettable words of hope and encouragement.

Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage to change the
things I can, and the
wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as the
pathway to peace.
Taking, as He did, this
sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it.
Trusting that He will make
all things right if I
surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy
in this life, and supremely
happy with Him forever in
the next. Amen!

Two Questions



Jeremiah Banks

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

I must confess that one of my routine prayer practices comes from an astrophysicist:

"Today I want to learn something. Today I want to help relieve at least one person's suffering."

While I am paraphrasing, these are words I heard Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson, a world-class astrophysicist and science communicator, share on his popular science podcast "StarTalk." As an off-handed comment, Tyson (who considers himself an agnostic) shared about what fundamental questions drive his life, saying that every day he asks himself the following two questions:

1. Have I learned something new today?
2. Have I helped relieve at least one person's suffering?

If he could answer "yes" to one or both, he could say: "It has been a good day."

I wonder what it would look like for Christians to have this kind of thoughtful, value-driven reflection on our everyday. As I deconstruct and continue to reconstruct my understandings of the world, of God and of my own little universe, I find daily affirmations like these grounding. They slow me down and remind me of what is important. They offer space for me to explore how I want to spend my days. They help me reflect on what God's dreams could look like for this universe, and they remind me of the important role we have in the everyday of exploring how God might use us to bring some of these dreams to life.

Prayer Practice: Affirmation Prayers

I often begin my time of prayer with a set of affirmations (like I list below) and would encourage you to do the same. Identify three to five simple things you find valuable, but potentially accomplishable today; then form each as a statement of prayer. Keep them value-driven and aspirational. As you speak these prayers, allow yourself space to voice them as evolving values and beliefs, as something you are both affirming and offering. After you say each one, pause and wonder how God might help you lean into them, expand them or challenge them today.

O LORD, I pray...
Today, I want to learn something.
Today, I want to relieve at least one person's suffering.
Today, I want to know the vulnerable by name.
Today, I want for my home to be a hospitable place.
Today, I want to be open to the power of friendship.
Today, I want to pay attention to the wisdom of my body.
Today, I want to celebrate and invest in my family.
Today, I want to explore my calling.
Today, I want to create and not just consume.
Today, I want to read.

Everyday prayers like these are short, but they are mighty. I imagine on the day I follow even a few of these prayers, God's kingdom will feel very near indeed.

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CH = Chaplain
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FPC = Child of Field Personnel
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S = CBF Staff Member

16 Lauren Hall, Katy, TX (CH)
16 Steven Harris, Salem, VA (PC)
16 John Reeser, Sautee Nacoochee, GA (CH)
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 Marcy Thomas, Brentwood, TN (CH)
21 Carson Foushee, Japan (FP)
21 Amy Mofield (S-Virginia)
21 Pat, Emeritus (FP)
21 Ron Winstead, Emeritus (FP)
22 Jon Ivy, Tuscaloosa, AL (CH)
22 Travis Yelton, San Antonio, TX (CH-Ret.)

MAY 23
Lectio Divina



Tina Boyles Bailey
Field Personnel in Graz, Austria

Psalm 139:7-14
"Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well."

One of my favorite prayer practices is Lectio Divina. It's a process that slows me down and combines a creative approach of pairing Scripture with prayer and art through reading, listening, meditation, reflection and contemplation. The art materials add an extra layer of significance to my practice.

Practice: Lectio and Visio Divina
Lectio and Visio Divina are ancient contemplative prayer practices. Lectio involves "divine reading" of sacred text, while Visio translates this to "divine seeing" by praying with visual images. Read the following Psalm, listening with the ear of your heart. Then turn your attention to the artwork below, and use the reflection guide as a path toward prayer.

Reflection Guide

- **Gaze (Look):** Sit with the image below and let your eyes take in the whole picture. Notice colors, shapes and literal details without analyzing them yet.
- **Reflect (Meditate):** Focus on one specific part of the image that draws your attention. Ask yourself what emotions or thoughts it brings up.
- **Respond (Pray):** Talk to God about what you are seeing and feeling.
- **Rest (Contemplate):** Let go of the image and your thoughts. Rest in communion with God.



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23 Polly Barnes, Brandon, MS (CH)
23 John Schumacher, Columbia, SC (CH)
24 Paulette Porter-Hallmon, Spartanburg, SC (CH)
24 Jordan Tripp, Raleigh, NC (CH)
25 Rick Burnette, Immokalee, FL (FP)
25 Daniel Mitchell, Columbus, GA (CH)
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)

MAY 30

Prayer for the Good Dream



Maj. Matthew A. Hanzelka

U.S. Air Force Reserve Chaplain Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland
San Antonio, Texas

Below is a conclusion I often use in my official invocations as a military chaplain.

Prayer

Thank you for the good dream of a just world you've planted in our hearts—for this community where we strive for it, and for those out contending for it today. Protect them, strengthen them, and bring them home safely. And like them, may we all find such a testimony of service to neighbor and nation.

Throughout the years I've had many people share with me how much this prayer has spoken to them. It's not uncommon for military members to come up to me after an official service and say that these words resonated with them. Why is that?

I think these words give voice to what many of us in uniform quietly carry: a dream in our hearts that we're helping create a more just world.

Additionally, the phrase "neighbor and nation" carries echoes of Jesus' greatest commandment—to love God and to love our neighbor. In a military context, that love often looks like standing guard at a gate through punishing cold or heat, accomplishing dirty maintenance tasks on aging equipment so evil is deterred through our readiness and processing the endless administrative tasks that keep service members cared for, families nurtured and units ready.

Ultimately, the words remind us first of the Dream Giver and second, that each of our small faithful acts of service contributes to our collective calling to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Charlie Reynolds

Associate Endorser for Military Chaplains



Almighty God, who art the author of liberty and the champion of the oppressed, hear our prayer. We the men of Special Forces acknowledge our dependence upon Thee in the preservation of human freedom. Go with us as we seek to defend the defenseless and to free the enslaved. May we ever remember that our nation, whose motto is "In God We Trust," expects that we shall acquit ourselves with honor, that we may never bring shame upon our faith, our families, or our fellow man. Grant us wisdom from Thy mind, courage from Thine heart, strength from Thine arm, and protection by Thine hand. It is for Thee that we do battle, and to Thee belongs the victor's crown. For Thine is the kingdom and power and glory forever, AMEN.

The Special Forces Prayer, Chaplain John Stevey

The Special Forces Prayer was written by Chaplain John Stevey in 1961 at the request of Lt. Gen. William P. Yarborough known as the "Father of the Modern Green Berets." It is a favorite prayer of many soldiers when they know that they will embark on a dangerous mission. It is not a prayer of aggression, but rather a reminder of the just cause for battle, to defend the defenseless and to free the enslaved. Most of you reading this will not be going into harm's way today but all of us face challenges. If we are followers of Jesus, we should be fighting to defend those who are defenseless and/or physically, mentally, financially and spiritually suppressed. All of us need God's power as we engage in that calling.

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30 Beom Jung, Chattanooga, TN (CH)
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.)

JUNE 6

For Peace in the Midst of Life's Noises



Tiffany Bennett-Cornelous

Pastor of Worship, Arts & Media, Macedonia New Life Church
Raleigh, North Carolina

Philippians 4:6-7, NIV

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

2 Thessalonians 3:16

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way."

In late 2025, I was asked to sing and be a panelist for a retreat in Wilmington, North Carolina. At its conclusion, I chose to linger. I sat down in a chair outside on the hotel deck and heard something...something I haven't heard in a long time. Silence. In that silence, God revealed something that shook me. It was as if God said, "Hey, Tiffany, I checked your calendar and you don't have anywhere to be." I had things happening before I got to the retreat and after returning home, but in that moment, the silence revealed peace and calm. That silence was the loudest peace I had ever experienced. I sat there with God, taking in God's creation—the peaceful ocean, the still sand—and feeling the calm breeze. Had I left right away, I would have let all the noise of my schedule win. But in that moment, God still had the last word and God cut through the noise of my life to make me spend time listening to the peace of God.

Since that time, every day, I have welcomed every opportunity to experience peace as silence from the noise of life, and the peace of God. Peace often arrives disguised as silence—and prayer begins when we choose to stay.

I invite you to recognize those moments that cut through the busyness and be at peace with God. When the noise of life grows loud, I return to this hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (Chisholm, 1923), as a prayer of remembrance and trust. This hymn is stamped in my mind and on my heart. God is faithful in the midst of the noises of life.

"Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father.
There is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fall not.
As thou hast been, thou forever will be
Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above.
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine and ten thousand beside.

Great is thy faithfulness.
Great is thy faithfulness.
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed, thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness
Lord unto me."

Prayer Practice: Silence

Throughout your week, welcome every opportunity to experience silence, stepping away from the noise of life to dwell in God's peace.

Birthdays this Week:

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

JUNE 13
Walking Prayers



Rick Burnette

Field Personnel in Immokalee, Florida

My everyday prayers are unpredictable. Some are scheduled whereas many of my prayers are spontaneous. Some are composed and revisited frequently, and some are unintelligible and quickly forgotten.

My morning prayer time, sometimes the most anxious time of day as I anticipate what might lie ahead, fits into my daily walks. To displace the negative with the positive as well as concern with gratitude, I first attempt to recognize what might be weighing down my soul.

With that momentary vacuum, I return to the verses of hymns and choruses to help settle my spirit, sometimes listening on my phone to "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" by Horatius Bonar and performed by the Hillbilly Thomists:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'"

Some mornings, I sing to myself the Taizé song of prayer:
"In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, In the Lord I will rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near."

When "surprised by joy" I'm frequently led to the words of "How Great Thou Art" and "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

When feeling the opposite of joy, after calming down enough to reflect, my prayer sometimes leads to a reflective "What will I learn from this?" exercise. I might also repeat the ancient, formulaic "Jesus Prayer," introduced by Catholic contemplatives: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

If not in too much distress, I attempt to empty my mind and listen for the still, small voice, perhaps through the dawn message of the mockingbird, blue jay or barn owl, "Thus saith the Lord."

Prayer Practice: Walking Prayer

One morning this week, take a prayer walk. Begin with the intention to be present to God as you walk, allowing songs, prayers and reflections to mingle in conversation with God.

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CH = Chaplain
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13 Christine, Africa/Middle East (FP)
13 Richard Forest, Louisville, KY (CH)
13 Kim Thompson, Columbia, SC (CH)
14 Chaouki Boulos, Emeritus (FP)
14 Caitie Jackson (S-North Carolina)
14 Tracey Lopez, Vienna, VA (CH)
14 Derrick Young, Jacksonville, FL (CH)
15 Melissa Whaley, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)
15 Zulma Zabala (S-CBF Global)
16 Kimberly Emery, Hartville, OH (CH)
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)

JUNE 20

Prayer Beads



Rachel Mumaw-Schweser

Senior Pastor, Union Church of Lake Bluff
Lake Bluff, Illinois

If you've been around me for any length of time, you know I can't sit still. At all.

My fingers will always find a pen to click, a surface to tap or my hair to run through when I'm trying to focus.

This is something that's always made prayer difficult for me. After 30 seconds or so my fingers refuse to be still any longer and search for something to fidget with. It helps me process my thoughts into words or helps the rest of me stay still in contemplation.

So, when a friend in seminary gifted me my first set of prayer beads, it was like a whole new world opened up. While most Christians probably think of rosary beads when we think of prayer beads, some Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists also turn to them to order their prayers. I'd never reached for them before because I wasn't Catholic, and the rosary prayers proclaimed a theology I didn't hold to.

But now I find comfort and focus in the Anglican prayer beads. They help structure my prayers in the mornings when I'm still trying to wake up and get my thoughts together, and they ground me in the evenings when I'm setting aside the problems and stresses of the day. And yes, they give me something to fidget with as I'm trying to focus.

The prayer below is one that another seminary friend gave me when I bought my current set of prayer beads from her. It strings together prayers from the Book of Common Prayer and the Psalms, and when I can't find the words to pray, I reach for it.

As someone who grew up in a tradition that valued extemporaneous prayer over liturgical ones, I've loved learning words written generations ago that still speak new life today. They're a comforting reminder that generations of people have had the same doubts, fears, hopes and joys that I have, and that hope and joy eventually would win out over doubt and fear. As the pastor of an all-denominational church, I've loved learning about the different traditions and prayers that my congregants bring from their backgrounds. Weaving it all together into my prayer life has made it all the richer, whether I'm reciting a prayer written down long ago, or making one up as my fingers find each bead.

I pray that your hands also find the prayers that speak to your soul, whether they're from your lips or from generations ago.

Prayer Practice: Praying with Beads (or fingers!)

Using a beaded piece of jewelry or prayer rosary, pray each line below with a different bead. If you don't have access to prayer beads, simply hold your palm open in your lap and for each line of the prayer, bring a different finger to your thumb.

- **(Bead 1)** In the name of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- **(Bead 2)** O God, make speed to save us, O Lord, make haste to help us.
- **(Bead 3)** Glory to the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- **(Bead 4)** Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.
  You who stand in the house of the Lord, lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord.
- **(Bead 5)** I lift my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?
  My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.
- **(Bead 6)** The Lord is our keeper; the Lord is the shade at our right hand; the Lord will keep us from all evil
- **(Bead 7)** Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.
- **(Bead 8)** You who stand in the house of the Lord, lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord.

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20 Tim Johns, Bluffton, SC (CH)
20 Jeff Lancaster, Cartwright, OK (CH)
21 Jim Cook, Salisbury, NC (CH)
21 Susan Harthon, Indianapolis, IN (CH)
21 Jeff Hoppe, Broken Arrow, OK (CH)
21 Ken Lake, Fort Mill, SC (CH)
21 Adam Page, Kingsport, TN (CH)
22 Sharon Eldridge, Smithfield, NC (CH)
22 Joanne Henley, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)
22 Becky Jackson, Temple, TX (CH)
22 Kirk, Southeast Asia (FP)
22 Jessica Prophitt, San Antonio, TX (CH)
22 Sara Robb-Scott, Aurora, CO (CH)
23 Sarah Ballew, Emeritus (EP)
23 Brett Bardoff, Asheville, NC (CH)
23 David Lowe, Fort Worth, TX (CH)
24 Robert Brown, Henrico, VA (CH)
24 LaToya Cross (S-CBF Global)
24 Sharon Felton (S-CBF Global)
25 David Weatherspoon, Memphis, TN (CH)
26 Elias Crosby, Lilburn, GA (CH)
26 Michael Ferguson, Fort Drum, NY (CH)
26 Sharon Fry, Midlothian, VA (CH)
26 Anna Jacks, Birmingham, AL (CH)
26 Dane Jackson (S-CBF Global)
26 Tamara Witte-Walczac, Baltimore, MD (CH)

JUNE 27

Pause, Reflect, Ask, Yield



Kirk and Suzie

Field Personnel in Southeast Asia

In the past few years since we became empty nesters and began entering into rhythms of shared devotionals together as a couple, we have been so blessed by the Lectio 365 app, a resource developed out of the 24/7 Prayer Movement of the Order of the Mustard Seed in the United Kingdom.

These devotional times give us an opportunity each morning and evening to stop and focus on the following sections of the acronym PRAY.
P: Pause
R: Reflect
A: Ask
Y: Yield

Each of these four steps is quite challenging, depending on the season, the day and life/ministry circumstances. We often find it hard to pause after those inner alarms go off and the plans of the day start rolling through our minds. Similarly, it takes intentionality to reflect before all the "doing" begins. We often are hesitant to ask God for little or big things. Hmm...why is that? And honestly, we have hard hearts some days, being slow to yield to His leading and His convictions.

At the end of every morning devotion, we pray the same closing prayer:
"Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to you in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen."

Prayer Practice:

P: Pause
R: Reflect
A: Ask
Y: Yield

PRACTICE IT

PRAY in Four Minutes

Spend about one minute with each movement. Close with open hands

P **PAUSE:** Become still. Notice your breathing and remember that God is present.

R **REFLECT:** Look back over the past day. Where did you notice grace, resistance, joy or need?

A **ASK:** Name what you need for yourself, your neighbors and the world.

Y **YIELD:** Release your plans and listen for the next faithful step.

PRAY

God, help me receive your love, join your work and surrender what I cannot control. Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

27 Alicia Lee, North Macedonia (FP)
28 Morgan Fritz, Gypsum, KS (CH)
28 Roger Rich, Lexington, SC (CH)
29 Kevin Adams, Cincinnati, OH (CH)
29 Carrie Harris (S-CBF Global)
30 Ira Campbell, Nashville, TN (CH-Ret.)
30 Margaret Guenther, Richmond, VA (PC)
30 Amy Holtz, Richmond, VA (CH)
30 David Potter, Oklahoma City, OK (CH)
30 Thomas Thorton, Spartanburg, SC (CH)
1 Paul Baxley (S-CBF Global)
1 Kyle Boyer, Jacksonville, FL (CH)
1 Debra Walters, Pensacola, FL (CH)
2 Jennifer Dockum, Ashland, VA (CH)
2 Sara Hunt-Felke, Birmingham, AL (CH)
2 Aaron Mussat, Mission, KS (CH)
2 Meghan Rush, Midlothian, VA (CH)
2 Steven Smith, Shreveport, LA (CH)
2 Kyle Tubbs (S-Oklahoma)
3 Elizabeth Ellis, Crestwood, KY (PC)
3 Brenda Lee, Williamsburg, VA (CH)
3 Leland Parks, Louisville, KY (CH)
3 Ascanio Peguero, Fort Worth, TX (CH)

JULY 4
The Examen with Littles



Laura and Carson Foushee
Field Personnel in Kanazawa, Japan

What are you thankful for today?
What would you like God to help you with?

Every night, as we tuck each of our children into bed, we ask them these questions to guide their prayers as they end their days. It is a simpler version of the examen prayer practice that encourages reflection on the day's events, moments of grace or moments of mistake and asking for the grace needed for the coming day. The rhythm of asking the same questions each night and helping them approach prayer with a posture of gratitude and with the expectant hope that God will attend to our needs has been a practice our little ones have been growing into over the last couple of years.

Some points of gratitude and help are repetitive each evening: "I'm thankful for our family." Or, "Please help me have no scary dreams." On other evenings, the prayers they voice are particular to the day: "I'm thankful for being able to ride my bike in the park." "I want God to heal Mia from her cold so she can come back to school." And some nights when our preschooler is feeling honest and bold, he answers "nothing!" to both questions; and we try to honor those prayers, too.

Practicing this with our children has been a way for us to practice examen as well; we get to reflect on the day with them; we get to hear what is on their hearts; we get to walk with them in seeing God and seeking God in their lives; we get to remind ourselves of God's goodness and presence with each of us as we went about our days. What are you thankful for? What can God help you with?

Prayer Practice: The Examen
What are you thankful for today?
What would you like God to help you with?

FOR HOME AND WORSHIP

A Bedtime Examen for Every Age

Ask the two questions from this week's reflection:

- *What are you thankful for today?*
- *What would you like God to help you with?*

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:
Welcome one-word answers, gestures or drawings.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENS, ADD:
When did you feel close to God—or far from God—today?

Adults can answer too.

CLOSE WITH THIS BLESSING

God of every day, thank you for the good we have named. Hold what worries us, forgive what needs forgiving and give us rest. Stay near through the night and lead us into tomorrow. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

4 José Jimenez-Abrams, Austell, GA (CH)
5 Coy Callicott, Louisville, KY (CH)
5 Amy Dills-Moore, Atlanta, GA (CH)
5 Jeff Fryer, Murfreesboro, TN (CH)
5 Mark Snipes (S-Virginia)
6 Shelah Acker, Uganda (FP)
6 Debbie Kubo, Arlington, TX (CH)
7 Barbara Dail, Greenville, NC (CH)
7 Steven Flowers, Waynesboro, VA (PC)
7 Wyatt Miles, Atlanta, GA (CH)
7 P. Randall Wright, Rock Hill, SC (CH)
8 Rachel Burton, Waco, TX (CH)
8 Ruth Perkins Lee (S-Georgia)
8 Renato Santos, Miami, FL (CH)
8 Steve Sexton, Knoxville, TN (CH)
8 Robert Summers, Lexington, KY (CH)
9 Miriam Dakin, Lynchburg, VA (CH)
9 Charles Godfrey II, Charlotte, NC (CH)
10 John Helms, Jefferson, GA (CH)
10 Heather Rothermel-Forrester, Lilburn, GA (CH)
10 Whitney Edwards Russell, Whiteville, NC (CH)
10 Tiffne Whitley, Emeritus (FP)

JULY 11
Confession



Mike

Field Personnel in Indonesia
Waco, Texas

At the end of Ramadan in Indonesia, it is common to greet one another with the phrase "Mohon maaf lahir dan batin." This roughly translates to an apology for any outward actions and inward thoughts or feelings and is a sort of communal confession of sin and a reboot for the year. In our Christian traditions, we often include a confession of sin in our weekly liturgy. Perhaps the closest to the above phrase is the following prayer:

"Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone."

This prayer of confession is equally holistic in recognizing that our failings are not only outward actions (deeds). They also include verbal (word) and inward (thought) failings. Jesus, after all, heightens previous concepts of sin to not only include the outward acts of murder and adultery but also the inward motivations and feelings which precede them. This is the great challenge of the Christian life: to not simply refrain from acting, but also to be transformed in such a way that we do not even think sinfully. Perhaps even more challenging is the final clause, "by what we have left undone." This is where I am most challenged to reflect and confess. What have I left undone? To whom or to where has God sent me that I have not gone? May we find ourselves leaving nothing undone.

Prayer Practice: Confession

Take a moment to confess your sins to God—both what you have done and "what you have left undone." Close your time of confession by requesting God's generous forgiveness and absolution.

FOR HOME AND WORSHIP

Confession and Assurance for Worship

LEADER: Merciful God, we confess the harm we have done in thought, word and action.

PEOPLE: Forgive us and remake us in love.

LEADER: We confess the truth we have avoided, the neighbor we have overlooked and the good we have left undone.

PEOPLE: Forgive us and remake us in love.

LEADER: Create in us honest hearts, attentive spirits and courage to repair what we can.

PEOPLE: By your grace, lead us into a new way.

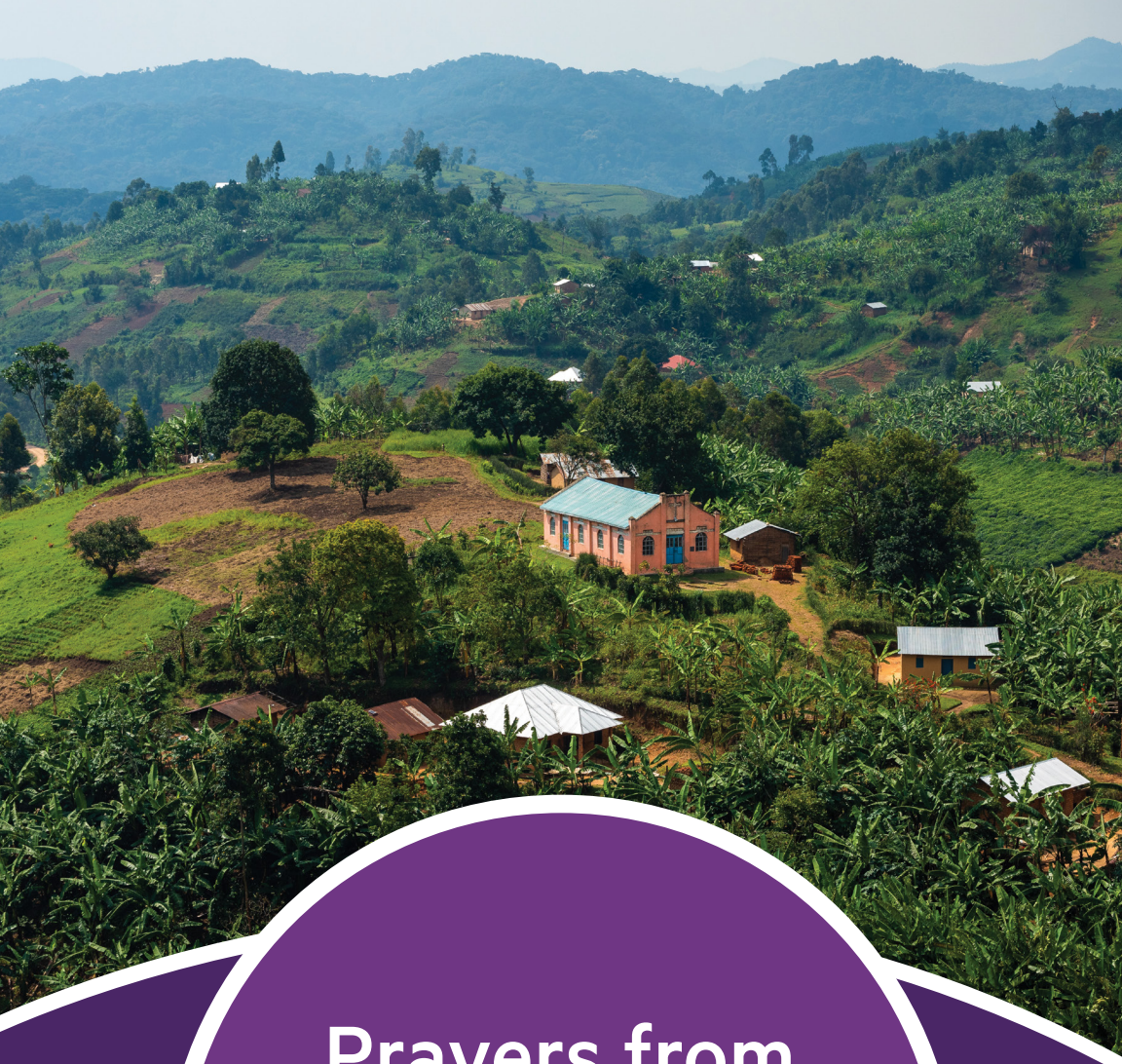
LEADER: In Christ, mercy meets us and love calls us forward.

ALL: Thanks be to God. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

11 Jamie Rorrer (S-North Carolina)
11 Steven Shaw, Norfolk, VA (CH-Ret.)
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 Jill Lynn (S-Virginia)
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)



Prayers from **Scripture**

Everyday prayers inspired by Scripture and the cries of our hearts.

JULY 18
1 Peter 5:6-7



Amaris Ross-Hillard

Executive Pastor, Friendship Christian Church
Gastonia, North Carolina

1 Peter 5:6–7, *The Message*

"Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you."

My name is Amaris. It has three syllables and a rhythm all its own [Am-a-RIS]. And for most of my life, I have quietly extended grace to every person who stumbled over it...the mispronunciations at checkout counters, in meeting rooms, in sanctuaries. I learned early to accommodate. To make it easy. To bend and to answer to whatever version of me someone else was comfortable with. Sigh.

But in my prayer closet, none of that is necessary.

In that space, in the ordinary, everyday place of prayer (which often looks like my car or the shower or a pause in a busy hallway) where it is just God and me, He has never once mispronounced my name. He doesn't reach for a shortened version or a safer approximation. He speaks "Amaris." Fully. Correctly. With the kind of knowing that goes beyond syllables and straight into the soul. It means He is careFULL about me and knows exactly what I have going on.

And I speak to God and call Him by His accurate name by acknowledging what He can sustain. Over the years of returning to Him daily, we have built a language between us. He meets me in the laughter of children telling the truth nobody asked for. He finds me in the colors of a sunset I didn't plan to stop and notice. He speaks to me through the waving of banners in worship...for me that beautiful, wordless, pictorial declaration is a real-time reminder that I am covered. He is most careful with me. He is most careful with YOU!

This is what Peter meant when he wrote, "live carefree before God; he is most careful with you" (1 Peter 5:6-7, MSG).

Not careless. Carefree! There is a difference.

Carefree means I trust the one who is carrying what I cannot. It means every day, in the ordinary moments, I cast the weight of it (all of it) onto a God who has already personalized a plan and a purpose with my name on it. Pronounced correctly.

I have learned that what matters to me matters to God. Not in a general, cosmic sort of way, but specifically. Personally. The way a shepherd knows which sheep is missing without having to count. The way, as the psalmist says, "His beauty and love chase after me every day of my life." —Psalm 23:6, MSG

We are never lost to God. He always knows where to find us. He knows us fully and covers us, intentionally. And He always calls our name correctly.

A Closing Prayer

God, my Shepherd!
I don't need a thing
that you have not already made provision for.
You find me in the ordinary.
You meet me in the middle of my day,
in the laughter of children,
in the colors of a sky I almost walked past,
in the waving of a banner that says:
you are covered.
When I have carried what was never mine to hold,
you have said, live carefree.
Not because life is light,
but because you are most careful with me.
So today I cast it.
All of it.
The weight that has a name.
The worry that doesn't yet.
I lay it down before the God
who has never once mispronounced my name.
Your beauty and your love
are chasing after me
every day of my life.
I am never lost to you.
I am always found.
Amen.

Adapted from Psalm 23 and 1 Peter 5:7, The Message

PRAY WITH THE FELLOWSHIP

God Knows Every Name

The birthday list below is more than a calendar. It is an invitation to pray for people by name.

Choose one person from the list. Say the person's name slowly before God. You may not know their ministry, needs or joys, but God does.

PRAY

God who calls each of us by name, bless _____ in the year ahead. Sustain their body, mind and spirit. Give them companions for the journey, courage for their calling and joy in your presence. Let them know they are seen, known and loved. Amen.

Return to the list later this week and pray for another person.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
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S = CBF Staff Member

18 Shellie Duplain, Greenwood, SC (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)
19 Steven Hill, Knoxville, TN (CH)
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 Thadikonda, 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)

JULY 25
Psalm 4:8



Heather Carlton

CBF-Endorsed Chaplain
United States Naval Reserves
St. Augustine, Florida

Psalm 4:8, ESV

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

I first began praying these words in my early 20s while serving as a missionary in Burkina Faso, West Africa. I lived alone in a small village and only spoke a few words of the language when I first arrived. In those early months, I was too afraid to sleep outside on the ground like everyone else, so I sweated it out inside my mud hut trying to forget the huge spiders on the walls and the lizards living in the thatch roof. Before going to sleep each night, I would whisper Psalm 4:8 as a prayer over myself. These words became my lifeline. My safety was found in Him and not in my physical surroundings.

Years later, the prayer returned to me in a different season of life as a new mother. Sleep no longer escaped me because of unfamiliar surroundings, but because of love and responsibility. I would lie awake listening for the breathing of my babies, wanting to be alert to every cry or need in the night. As my children grew older, the worries changed again. I found myself praying for their futures, their safety and for peace in the face of all the things a mother cannot control.

Now, entering yet another stage of life, I find myself returning once again to these familiar words. Perimenopause has brought middle-of-the-night wakefulness and restless hours when sleep refuses to return. In those dark and quiet moments, fears and worries can come crashing in all at once. And still, this prayer rises to meet me. The circumstances throughout my life have changed many times, but these words have remained constant. Again and again, God has met me in the nighttime hours with comfort, peace and rest.

Psalm 4:8 has become my everyday prayer because it reminds me that true safety has never depended on my surroundings, my ability to protect the people I love or even my ability to quiet my own mind. My peace comes from the steady presence of God, who has faithfully watched over me in every season of life.

Hilda G. Acosta Rivera



Pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista de Corral Viejo
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Lord, calm my mind and still my heart with Your peace tonight!

Psalm 4:8 concludes a "Psalm of Trust." David is under social pressure, facing slander and crises. While others seek solutions in material possessions or external rituals, the author finds his well-being directly in the divine presence.

David's peace does not come from his problems having disappeared, but from his communion with God, having overcome his concern with them. This psalm arises from the most painful crisis in King David's life: the rebellion of his son Absalom.

This was no ordinary war—it was a family and political tragedy that pushed David to the limits of his emotional endurance. What makes Psalm 4:8 so remarkable is that David writes about "sleeping in peace" while his enemies are literally pursuing him to kill him. His own son is leading the opposing army and David finds himself in a physically vulnerable and uncomfortable position. The crisis was not theoretical; it was an imminent threat of death. Therefore, his declaration of trust is not a poetic wish, but a radical decision of faith in the midst of total chaos.

Applying Psalm 4:8 today doesn't mean ignoring danger, but managing fear through active trust. David didn't sleep because the world was safe, but because God was sovereign. Excessive consumption of tragic news and rumors fuels paranoia. Therefore, filter the information you consume before bed; let the last thought in your mind be the promise of divine care. Verbalize your fears about safety before going to bed, and by affirming, "I will lie down in peace," trust the One who guards your home. Your worth and your life do not depend on crime statistics, but on your relationship with God. True peace comes when you accept that, even in the worst-case scenario, your eternal destiny is secure.

Prayer

Lord, today I acknowledge that the atmosphere of insecurity fills me with fear. I surrender my anxious thoughts and my worry to You. I choose to let go of the burden of what I cannot control.

Father, my safety does not depend on locks, on patrols or on my own vigilance. You are my shield. You are the only one who has absolute power over my life and that of my family.

Even though the world is uncertain, my soul finds refuge in You. I lie down in Your shadow and accept Your gift of sleep. I rest because I know that while I sleep, You remain awake, watching over me. Therefore, I will lie down in peace and sleep soundly.

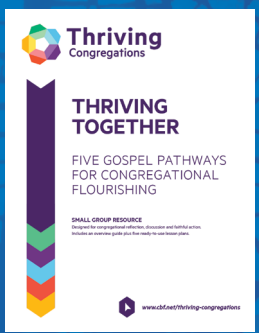
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S = CBF Staff Member

25 Laura Tadlock, Birmingham, AL (CH)
26 Scott Jensen, Saint Joseph, MO (CH)
26 Rick Sample, San Francisco Bay Area, CA (FP)
27 Peter Ott, Newport, RI (CH)
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)
29 Ben Neal, Clinton, TN (CH)
29 Briana Whaley, Palm Harbor, FL (CH)
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)

MINISTRY RESOURCES

TO HELP YOUR CHURCH THRIVE



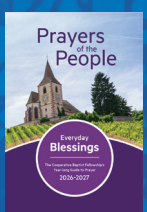
FEATURED RESOURCE

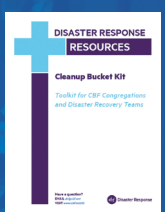
Thriving Together: Five Gospel Pathways for Congregational Flourishing is a six-week Bible Study designed for congregational reflection, discussion and faithful action. The free download includes an overview guide plus five ready-to-use lesson plans.

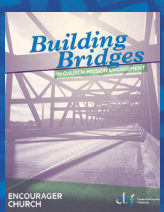












www.cbf.net/resources

AUGUST 1
Matthew 6:9-13



Chris Freeman

Furman University, Class of 2027

Matthew 6:9-13

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

A Daily Prayer for Rest

In my life, rest has always required routine: a pre-determined list of calming things to do before closing my eyes for the night. The Lord's Prayer has been a part of that nightly routine since childhood; my great-aunt would recite Matthew 6:9-13 every evening as I went to sleep. For years, I listened to her pray for grace and promise to provide the same for others, for guidance and direction and for the stability of daily bread. Eventually, I began to pray with her; we would speak in unison and share that moment of mutual devotion. These words have always provided moments of reflection and connection after the events of a long day. As I've entered this new stage of life, I'm not able to pray with my aunt as frequently, but I continue to rely on this prayer and her wisdom in my routine. The structure the prayer provides slows my mind; I often repeat the prayer numerous times before I go to sleep, ensuring that it has my full attention. I pray that this simple prayer can provide you with the rest I'm sure you deserve.

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S = CBF Staff Member

1 Dave McNeely (S-Tennessee)
1 Stephen Saunders, Live Oak, TX (CH)
3 Mina Podgaisky, Poland (FP)
3 David Wirth, Mt. Orab, OH (CH)
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)

AUGUST 8
Psalm 34



Major Jesse Hunt

Chaplain
Fort Riley, Kansas

Psalm 34

"I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

This psalm has been my prayer/meditation focus when God is preparing me for difficult missions from Airborne School, deployment in Afghanistan and rotations in Europe.

Ministry takes us to places that seem crazy and uncomfortable. As an army chaplain for 16 years, I have been in many of them. From going to war to jumping out of planes, I often hear myself thinking "this is a bit crazy."

This psalm is David's praise after he was in a crazy situation that literally led him into acting insane. Looking back, David sees clearly how God delivered him and offers an open invitation to all who will listen to come and extol His name together.

God has delivered me through the crazy! This centers me again and again as the world around me seems crazier by the moment. He did it. He does it. He will continue to do it! That is who he is and it is what he does. Lord, help us continue to come, taste and see that you are good!
—Amen

PRACTICE IT

Taste, See, Remember

Choose one ordinary food or drink—a piece of bread, fruit, water, tea or coffee. Before taking it, pause.

TASTE: Receive it slowly and give thanks for the people and creation that brought it to you.

SEE: Look for one sign of goodness in your surroundings.

REMEMBER: Recall a difficult season through which God or God's people helped carry you.

PRAY

Faithful God, when fear narrows my vision, help me taste and see your goodness again. Give me courage for today's work and gratitude for the grace that has already met me. Amen.

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S = CBF Staff Member

8 Janée Angel, Belgium (FP)
8 LuAnne Prevost, Knoxville, TN (CH)
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)

AUGUST 15
1 Peter 5:7



Janée Angel
Field Personnel in Antwerp, Belgium

1 Peter 5:7
"Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully.]"

Sigh. Evening has finally arrived. I feel the heaviness of the day weighing on my chest as I settle in for the night. My worn leather-bound Bible, marked and written in, lies open on my bed. I have just read through a portion of the Word and this year I am chewing it slowly. There's no speed race reading this time. I am soaking in every word and finding joy in the way God remains the greatest author the world has ever known. This moment becomes breath to my life.

Reading becomes the ongoing conversation where God speaks, and prayer becomes the avenue where I respond. My heart desires deeper connection. I long for every good and perfect gift that the Father wants to give. But at the moment, I want the safety that only God can offer.

There's so much talk online about dysregulated nervous systems. We as humans are running in fight or flight mode for most of our waking hours. We are filled with the need to rush and accomplish, all in our own strength.

But at the end of my day, God invites me into His safe place. With my hands open to receive, I breathe deeply. I inhale through my nose and breathe in His rest and exhale through my mouth and release the stress of the day. I think of casting my worries on Him because He cares for me.

"Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]."

I am safe. I sigh again deeply in His presence. I trust Him. I can rest.

In the first volume of McKelvey's *Every Moment Holy*, one of his prayers reminds me to invite Christ in to heal the wounds of the day and resurrect my love for a new day.

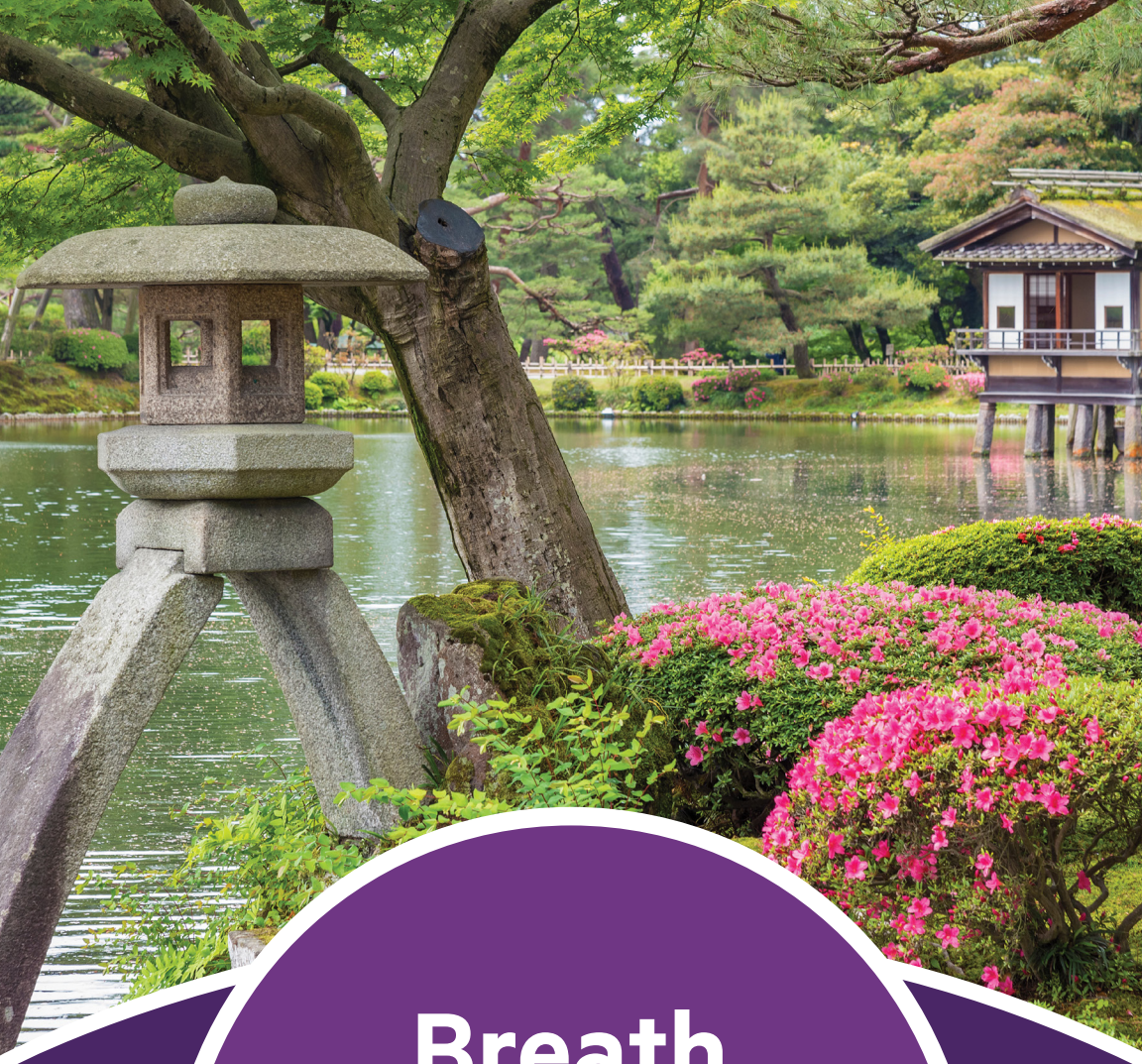
It echoes the words of Jeremiah 30:17 where the Lord promises to restore my health and heal my wounds. So, I hold His promises in my mind as I breathe and find a sense of calm from the chaos of the day.

I close my eyes continuing the conversation that never ends.

Birthdays this Week:

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15 Ron McClung (S-Georgia)
15 Daniel Shadix, Prattville, AL (CH)
16 Don McNeely, Emeritus (FP)
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)



Breath Prayers

Everyday prayers that can be prayed and repeated with the inhale and the exhale of our breath.

AUGUST 22

Speak to Me and through Me



Jocelyn Blount

Senior Pastor, Good Hopewell Baptist Church
Richmond, Virginia

> **Jeremiah 1:7, ESV**
> "But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a youth"; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.'"

Breath Prayer

Speak to me and through me.

Six words. One breath. A complete surrender.

This is the prayer I say every time I get up to preach. Before I speak a word, before the congregation grows quiet, before I begin to share what I believe is the living Word of God, I take a breath and say these six words: "Speak to me and through me."

I didn't find this prayer in a book. It came to me in that space between preparing and preaching, in the moment when a preacher realizes that all the study and late nights are not enough without God's breath moving through it. Every sermon, I pray the same words: "Speak to me and through me."

What I appreciate most about this prayer is that it moves in two directions. First, it is about being open: "Speak to me." I am asking God to work in me before working through me. I admit, quietly and quickly, that I am not the source. I am just a vessel, a conduit, an imperfect jar of clay. I need to hear from God even as I stand to speak for God. A preacher who stops listening is in trouble; so I return, every Sunday, every revival, every graveside and every opportunity, to this open posture: "Speak to me."

But the prayer goes further: "and through me." This is where surrender turns into being sent. I am not just asking to receive; I am offering myself as the instrument for the Word. The amazing and humbling part of preaching is that God chooses to use us, with all our histories, doubts, wounds and questions, as voices for the gospel. "Speak through me" is the preacher's way of saying Isaiah's old words, "Here am I, send me"—a willingness to be used, even when you do not feel ready.

Over the years, this prayer has kept me going when nothing else could. There have been Sundays when I stepped into the pulpit carrying grief I could not name, stood before a hurting congregation and all I had were these six words. Again and again, they have been enough. Not because the words are special, but because God is faithful. The same Spirit that hovered over the waters at creation still hovers, still moves, still speaks.

To be honest, this breath prayer is also a daily way of letting go. Ministry can tempt us to perform, to prove ourselves, or to speak for God instead of with God. Every time I pray, "speak to me and through me," I am choosing to step aside again. I remind myself whose voice this is and whose people they are.

To anyone who preaches, teaches, counsels or serves and wonders if they have anything left to give, I want you to know: You do not have to create the word yourself. You only need to ask for it. Six words. One breath. A complete surrender.

Speak to me and through me.

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22 Sharondalyn DuPree, Sacramento, CA (CH)
22 Daniel Hix, Maryville, TN (CH)
22 Ana Maria Podgaiskaya, Chicago, IL (CH)
22 Erica Soto (S-CBF Global)
22 William Thompson, Los Alamitos, CA (CH)
22 Mark Wagner, Vashon, WA (CH)
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/S-North Carolina)
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 Jenny Clore (S-Church Benefits Board)
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)

AUGUST 29

All Praise Belongs to God



Jonathan Bailey

Field Personnel in Bali, Indonesia

Psalm 113:3

"From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised."

Breath Prayer

All Praise Belongs to God.
Alhamdulillah (الحمد لله)

This single Arabic word entered my life in Dakar, Senegal, where I lived from 1989 to 1991 as a Journeyman missionary. There, it threaded through daily conversation—greetings, partings, the small acknowledgments after a meal or a piece of good news. I picked it up and never put it down.

What drew me to it then was in part the way it tied me to a religious world far from my American Christian upbringing. I had traveled in the Middle East and North Africa, studied Arabic for a while, and thought my ministry would unfold in a Muslim context. "Alhamdulillah" was a slender thread to that world—one that, even at that early stage, was shaping me.

God, as it turned out, had other plans. Hindu Bali was not on my radar in those Senegal years. And yet, after more than 30 years living in a Balinese village, the word is still on my lips. Sometimes it is rote—and I have come to trust that even rote prayer carries a quiet awareness of our connection to God-as-Source. The everyday-ness is the gift.

A belief that words carry power runs deep in Balinese culture—paralleling the ancient Middle Eastern world in which Christianity took root. The Hebrew scriptures hold something similar: to know God's name is to stand in relation to a Holy Other. Bali keeps that ancient context alive for me. As both an artist and follower in the way of Christ, I confess that words create reality. "Alhamdulillah" speaks me, and the world around me, into thanksgiving—100 times a day, almost without my noticing.

Karen Zimmerman

Field Personnel in Waco, Texas



Psalm 34:1-3

"I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

During the five years I served as field personnel in Northern Africa, one Arabic phrase was truly inescapable. "Alhamdulillah" was an acceptable answer for almost every question and an appropriate response to almost every piece of news. It means "Praise God," and it wasn't unusual for a conversation to start like this:

"How are you doing?"
"Alhamdulillah, praise God."
"How is your health?"
"Alhamdulillah, praise God."
"How is your family?"
"Alhamdulillah, praise God."

These answers were always appropriate—in sickness and in health, in hard times and in good times, in peaceful moments and in the middle of chaos. At first it felt a little disingenuous to me. Was this an easy way to avoid answering hard questions? Maybe partly. But on a deeper level, I came to appreciate the spontaneous way that God's praises popped into casual conversation. Witnessing beauty, celebrating accomplishments, learning new insights—all lead to praising God and alhamdulillah entered my vocabulary as the most appropriate response to good news, as a reminder to trust God in hard times, and as a simple way to recalibrate joy.

Since I've relocated to the United States, I've found it to be truly challenging to drop all the alhamdulillah from my speech. I understand that most Americans aren't used to hearing Arabic phrases casually scattered into everyday conversations; so, for a while I tried using the more familiar Hebrew word, "Hallelujah." I still find myself with an obnoxious amount of daily Hallelujahs; God's goodness is always popping into our daily lives. So maybe it comes out in English, Arabic or perhaps Hebrew, but I don't intend to stop anytime soon. Thanks be to God. Hallelujah. Alhamdulillah. Amen.

PRACTICE IT

Praise Across Languages

الحمد لله

Alhamdulillah - All praise belongs to God.
Hallelujah - Praise the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Pray each phrase slowly, allowing praise to move through a different language and rhythm.

INHALE: Alhamdulillah.
EXHALE: All praise belongs to God.

Then name one ordinary gift—food, friendship, safe arrival, work completed or strength for the day—and answer:
Thanks be to God.

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S = CBF Staff Member

29 Robert Blackwood, St. Petersburg, FL (CH)
29 Pam Foster, Haslet, TX (CH)
29 Blake Strother, Durham, NC (CH)
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 Heather Carlton, St. Augustine, FL (CH)
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 Josh Hunt (S-South Carolina)
4 Vicki Lumpkin, Greensboro, NC (CH)
4 Shirley Massey, Chapel Hill, NC (CH)

SEPTEMBER 5

Lord Jesus Christ, Have Mercy



Jade and Shelah Acker

Field Personnel in Kampala, Uganda

Breath Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Have Mercy on Me

Before having kids, I occasionally wondered what the point of prayer was. God knew what I needed and wanted, and loved a sinner like me, and basically was supplying all my needs. I grew up in a loving Christian home. Sometimes things were tough, but we always had food on the table. Of course, we would always go to church on Sunday mornings for Sunday school, big church and, at night, discipleship training and another big church with a full sermon. My poor childhood pastor had to prepare two sermons each week. Then there was Wednesday night fellowship and RAs (Royal Ambassadors). My mom was the choir director. (She wasn't allowed the title "minister of music" back in the 1970s.) After RAs, my brother and I would have to wait in the sanctuary until choir practice was over...at 9:00 p.m. I liked RAs and remember getting pins and patches as I advanced up the ladder.

I still remember the RA pledge: "As a Royal Ambassador, I will do my best: to become a well-informed, responsible follower of Christ; to have a Christlike concern for all people; to learn how the message of Christ is carried around the world; to work with others in sharing Christ; and to keep myself clean and healthy in mind and body."

Going to church and attending RAs obviously influenced my calling to be a missionary. I've been and continue to be a royal ambassador of Christ. I'm so grateful for so many who pray for us on the field using devotionals like Prayers of the People. Your prayers sustain us!

God provided a wonderful place for me to grow up—a small town with a loving family and a Baptist church family. But prayer was what we said before family meals, before the offering and at the end of a church service. And heaven forbid a certain deacon in my childhood church was called on to pray. That was going to be a LONG prayer and probably a good time to take a nap. Even now as an adult, when a prayer starts to go on and on, my mind wanders and my eyes stay shut. And then I get the nudge from my wife that I'm starting to breathe too deeply.

I could always fall asleep during a good prayer. But, having kids changes a parent's prayer life. No longer did I wonder what the point of prayer was. Shelah and I would cry out to God because we didn't have a clue what to do as young parents. I still can't believe the hospital handed us our firstborn child into our sole care to take her home. We weren't prepared and had to rely on prayer, friends, family, books and guessing. When one of our kids became sick, we relied on prayer.

We've been in different countries in Africa over the 20-plus years we've been field personnel with CBF. The medical care in these countries has rarely been ideal or sufficient. But God has brought us through so far. About 10 years ago, we were struggling on the field and one of our kids was very sick. I read in a devotional book the "breath" prayer. "Lord Jesus Christ" (as you breathe in) followed by, "have mercy on me" (as you breathe out). I started doing this and felt comforted. I breathed in, "Lord Jesus Christ" and breathed out, "have mercy on _____." I would name my sick child's name. Or name a problem. Or whatever came to mind. And many times, as I prayed this and allowed my breathing to become calm, I would fall asleep. I didn't feel guilty about falling asleep mid-prayer because I felt God's presence and my anxiety decreased. And as a parent, having my child lie in my lap sleeping, or rocking my child to sleep as they breathed deeply was one of the best feelings ever. We are God's precious children. He holds us, loves us and listens to us as we pray and cry out to Him. Feeling His presence and resting in Him, is where we find peace. The peace that surpasses all understanding. Just like the closing of my childhood pastor's prayer, with "Just as I Am" playing in the background, with every head bowed and every eye closed...
Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!

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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 Amy Lee Gallaher (S-North Carolina)
5 Alexandria Geovanni, Lake Charles, LA (CH)
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)

SEPTEMBER 12
Befriend Faithfulness



Dan Shadix

Chief of Chaplain Service (retired)
Prattville, Alabama

Psalm 37, ESV

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Breath Prayer

Befriend faithfulness.

Befriend Faithfulness. This is a breath prayer I say to remind myself of who I am and why I am on this planet.

Befriend faithfulness.
You'll find it in Psalm 37:
"Trust in the LORD, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart" (ESV).

In recent months, I have made it a habit to begin the day reading the Psalms. Recently, I have read the Psalms and made notes pretty much every day. It has come in handy in sharing a message on the Memory Care Unit where I currently work a couple of days a week. As I read Psalm 37, this phrase struck me: "Befriend faithfulness!" What a wonderful prayer! Lord, today I am befriending faithfulness!

Many years ago, as a seminary student, I sat in a chapel service as one of our renowned Old Testament professors preached that day.

As he began to speak, the old sound system began to "act up" again. He commented, "It looks like an institution as affluent as this one could afford a new sound system." I have forgotten the sermon topic that day, but this is how he ended: He said, "Jesus will always be with you. Your mother or father may abandon you, your brothers and sisters, but Jesus will always be with you."

And that, my friend, makes all the difference. "Befriend faithfulness." It can be said in one breath. How am I befriending faithfulness? I can breathe this prayer as often as I desire. And as the psalmist goes on to say, I can "delight myself in the Lord" and let the Lord take care of the rest!

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12 Bryan Lake, Cumming, GA (CH)
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, Parris Island, SC (CH)
17 Angela Clark, Matthews, NC (CH)
17 Jean Craddock, Lexington, KY (PC)
17 Tammy Latimer, Springfield, MO (CH)
17 Elket Rodríguez, 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 Summers Shannon (S-Kentucky)

SEPTEMBER 19

I Love You, Jesus



Chaplain Colonel Charles Seligman III

Lakehurst, New Jersey

Breath Prayer

I love you, Jesus.

"I love you, Jesus" is a breath prayer that has recently become a constant after 35-plus years in the Air Force where I currently serve as a chaplain.

There have been seasons in my life where the path wasn't as clear as I wanted. Over 20 years of war brought many voices inviting me in different directions. Looking back, I can see how easy it would have been to "walk in the counsel" of the easy decision, the popular choice or what was expedient rather than what was true. Psalm One has served as an invitation to a different way of being.

Blessed is the one…whose delight is in the law of the Lord.

The invitation is to live a life delighted. A life steady and stable. A life nourished by something deeper than circumstances. When you are recovering from hardships, this psalm is like cold lemonade on a hot day.

Psalm One reminds me that even while there are so many ways to get it wrong, getting it right just means being able to find delight. Not from doing more, but from being delighted.

The quiet promise of Psalm One is not a life without difficulty, but a life of delighted love in the bridegroom.

For anyone walking through uncertainty or pressure, Psalm One offers this encouragement: Your stability is not determined by the voices of those around you, but by the one who is watching over you.

So, to breathe, "I love you, Jesus" is a response to that invitation to delight, to meditate, to plant myself again by living water and ignore those outside voices. Because a rooted life is a delight-filled life.

CLOSING BLESSING

Carry One Prayer with You

Over the past year, which prayer in this guide has returned to you most often?

Write it here:

_____

_____

Let it become part of the ordinary rhythm of your life—in the car, at the table, before a meeting, beside a hospital bed, on a walk or as you fall asleep.

A CLOSING BLESSING

May the prayer God has planted in you take root beside living water. May it steady you in difficult seasons, deepen your delight in Christ and bear fruit in acts of love. Amen.

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19 Brittany Kohan, Pittsboro, NC (CH)
19 Cari Willis, Benson, NC (CH)
20 David Bluford, Lenoir City, TN (CH)
20 Heidi Dechow, Salisbury, NC (CH)
20 Katherine Moneypenny, Douglas, GA (CH)
20 Renée Owen (S-CBF Global)
20 Adam Ridenhour, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)
21 Mark Flores, Lynchburg, VA (CH)
21 Robert Hecox, Okinawa, Japan (CH)
21 Finnley Ramirez, 2019, Philippines (FPC)
22 William Brown, Charlotte, VA (CH)
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 Nicole Averett (S-Church Benefits Board)
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)



Music as Prayer

Everyday prayers drawn from our favorite spiritual songs and hymns and the transcendent music that blurs the boundary between the sacred and secular.

SEPTEMBER 26

Tune Our Hearts to Your Spirit



Scarlette Jasper

Field Personnel in Appalachia

Many of you know that my late husband, Charles Brian Jasper, was a singer, songwriter, musician and DJ. Music was a huge part of our life together. He was greatly influenced by the Beatles and shared the love of their music with me. You may not think of the Beatles when you reflect on prayer, but there is a spiritual dimension to much of their music.

"Let It Be" was written by Paul McCartney (although credited to Lennon-McCartney). During a tense time in recording the title album, Paul was inspired by a dream where his late mother, Mary, appeared to him, stating these simple words, repeated like a mantra in the song "Let It Be." They are simple words, yet they carry the weight of surrender. In Scripture, we hear a similar invitation: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Letting it be is not passive resignation; it is an act of trust. It is releasing control and resting in the quiet assurance that God is still at work, even when life feels uncertain.

In "All You Need Is Love," credited to Lennon-McCartney, we hear a bold, almost childlike declaration. At first glance, it may feel overly simple; but spiritually, it reflects one of the deepest truths of the Christian faith: "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love is not merely an emotion; it is the very nature of God, the force that holds creation together, the calling placed upon our lives.

Then there is "Imagine," written by John Lennon. Though not explicitly religious—and at times even challenging traditional faith—it expresses a longing for unity, peace and a world without division. It's as relevant today as when it was written. For believers, this longing echoes the prayer of Jesus in John 17: That all may be one. Even in its tension, the song invites us to consider how we might participate in God's vision for reconciliation. And in the gentle meditation of "Here Comes the Sun," penned by my favorite Beatle, George Harrison, we hear resurrection language. After a long, cold winter, light breaks through again. It reminds us that darkness does not have the final word. Hope rises. Joy returns. God's mercies are new every morning.

Last but not least, the Beatle that I have seen perform in person the most times, Ringo Starr, probably has the most spiritual and faith-based themes in his music,

especially in his later career. “Oh My Lord,” “Thank God for Music” and “Free Your Soul” are just a few. His tracks often reflect themes of gratitude, peace and spiritual seeking. Peace and Love, Ringo.

Music is a large part of my spiritual life; it lifts me and draws me closer to God. May you find peace and joy in various ways of experiencing prayer.

Prayer

Gracious and ever-creating God,

You speak not only through Scripture, but through melody, rhythm and the longing of the human heart.

In the quiet refrain of “let it be,” teach us to trust You more deeply. When we try to control what we cannot hold, gently remind us to rest in Your presence.

In the bold cry that “all you need is love,” root us again in Your truth—that love is not shallow or easy, but sacrificial, enduring and divine.

In the dreaming of peace and unity, stir within us a holy imagination—that we might become peacemakers in a divided world, participants in Your kingdom here and now.

And when we walk through seasons of shadow, bring us back to the promise that the sun will rise again. Let hope break through our despair, and light awaken our souls.

God of harmony and grace,
tune our hearts to Your Spirit,
that our lives may become a song of love, peace and faith.
Amen.

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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)
27 Beth Jones (S-Church Benefits Board)
28 Jonathan Amaya, Houston, TX (CH)
28 Renate Kruklis, Braselton, GA (CH)
29 Asbrubal Forte, Miami, FL (CH)
29 John Harris, Pelham, AL (PC)
30 Scott Boyles, Bluff City, TN (CH)
30 Ossie McKinney (S-CBF Global)
30 Rachel Webb, College Station, TX (CH)
30 Todd Weber, Louisville, KY (CH)
1 Tina Boyles Bailey, Austria (FP)
1 Faith Bynoe (S-Baptist Fellowship of the Northeast/CBF Global)
2 Maha Boulos, Emeritus (FP)
2 Keith Holmes, Emeritus (FP)

OCTOBER 3

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah



Sharondalyn Y. DuPree

CBF-Endorsed Chaplain and Founder of Chaplain Life
Salinas, California

My everyday prayers include the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23 and a prayer that rises from the words of a familiar hymn, "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah." The hymn was written by William Williams of Pantycelyn, a Welsh Methodist preacher who lived in the 18th century. Although it was born far from the American South, this hymn has crossed oceans and cultures and has become a prayer that speaks to the human condition everywhere.

For me, it carries the sound of my grandfather's powerful voice. Tall and slender, bald at the crown with mid-length silver hair along the sides, dressed in a suit and tie every Sunday, he carried a quiet authority. He was a man of few but wise and steady words; yet when he sang, his voice rose with a strength that felt as if it came straight from heaven. He was affectionately known as Mr. B. J., a deacon who served faithfully for more than 70 years in our small rural church in the deep South. I can still hear him standing at the deacons' table, singing this hymn a cappella with a strength that rose from the depths of his soul. His voice filled the sanctuary with conviction, with my grandmother waving along in praise. People often called on him to sing because he carried a sound that moved hearts. I remember sitting beside him as a child. Sometimes he would create his own verses, songs that rose from the Spirit and flowed from a place only he and God really understood. Those soul stirring renditions shaped me and everyone who heard him.

The words of "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" are not simply lyrics. They are a prayer. This prayer has been carried by many communities, including Black congregations across the African diaspora. People who knew hardship and uncertainty found in this hymn a steady plea for guidance, strength and provision. While it holds a special place in the Black Church, its message is not isolated to any one person. Every person who sings it may find meaning in its cry for direction and sustaining grace.

While I do not know everything this hymn meant to my grandfather, I still hear his voice singing the lines. Over time, I have crafted my own meaning. When I begin my day, I stand in awe of God who is powerful and mighty and yet willing to guide, hold or protect and carry me. I ask God to direct my thoughts and my steps with wisdom for the day. I ask for a favor that only God can bestow. I am humbled by the gift of divine guidance. The source of God's Spirit for me yields hope and strength. The hymn speaks of a barren land in a world or situations that can feel barren at times. This hymn reminds me that the weak and even the exhausted can find strength and restoration through the mighty hand of God. The final portion reminds me that I can be resourceful because God provides what I need.

This prayer is not only for me. It is for those around me and for those I serve. It contains so many essential elements in just a few lines. For that, I rejoice. I am grateful that I can still hear the sound! May you hear the sound of what this hymn means for you.

Prayer

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty.
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.
Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.

— William Williams of Pantycelyn, 1745

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

3 Jonathan Bailey, Indonesia (FP)
3 Randy Carter (S-North Carolina)
3 Andrew Finkler, Fayetteville, NC (CH)
3 Matt Norman, Spain (FP)
4 Michael Metcalf, Statesville, NC (CH)
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-CBF Global)
8 Lucas Dorion (S-Alabama)
8 Robb Small, Geismar, LA (CH)

OCTOBER 10

Offering for Global Missions



Jeff Lee

Field Personnel in Skopje, Macedonia

Prayer

"O Lord of my life, give me not the spirit of sloth, idle curiosity, lust for power and idle talk. But grant unto me a spirit of integrity, humility, patience and love. Grant me the wisdom to see my own faults and not to judge my brother or sister.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God,
Have mercy on me
A sinner
The Lord is my refuge.

O Lord,

I seek you in everything that I do. I pray that everything I do will glorify your name. I want to be known as a man after your heart. Shape me. I want to be called a son of thunder. Make me a voice for the voiceless. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Let me see you in the least of these. I want to be a caretaker of your people and your creation.

Amen."

I wrote this prayer many years ago and it always surprises me when it comes back into my life. It is a bit of a ramble, but it is from the heart.

When I was in high school, I came across a few verses that really impacted me, and this prayer is based on those verses. Philippians 4:4-7: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

These verses have helped me through many difficult times in my life. The last line of my prayer has a special place in my heart. It comes from my grandfather. He would end every prayer "...and our lives to your service in everything we do." Because of that, I add it to the end of my prayers also.

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

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)
12 Myles Fleming, San Antonio, TX (CH)
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 Montes 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 (Ret-CH)
16 Sarah Neeley, Tyler, TX (CH)
16 Monty Self, Little Rock, AR (CH)

OCTOBER 17

Spiritual Care Week – Song from a Child's Heart



Connie Beemer

Chaplain at EverTrue Brooking Park
St. Louis, Missouri

Proverbs 22:6

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The teen was brought into St. Louis Children's Hospital, fighting and clawing at the staff, physically pushing against the care that she desperately needed. My chaplain friend was trying to provide prayer or something soothing to help the staff be able to get an IV in, but nothing was working. Suddenly, she remembered the children's Sunday school song that she had learned and started singing "Jesus Loves Me" to the teen. Immediately, the teen stopped fighting, calmed and sang along with her. For the next two hours, we all took turns singing the song with her to calm her, until she was able to go to sleep.

I wasn't surprised that the song "Jesus Loves Me" had such a powerful effect. It is one of the most requested spiritual songs in our hospital, and one that is etched onto the hearts of children and adults alike. Most remember it from their earliest days of being in church, or as the song sung over them by their mothers. During difficult moments where family is gathered for the last moments with their child, or for prayers before difficult procedures, the families sing "Jesus Loves Me" together with the chaplains. Its words touch hearts and minds, giving peace, like no other songs that are requested.

Now, as I work with seniors at the other end of the age spectrum in facilities as their chaplain, they also love to hear "Jesus Loves Me" in our services and remember the loving faith being passed on through the words by their own families so many years ago. Although "Jesus Loves Me" is not in our prayer books or liturgical traditions, the power of its simple prose remains within the lives of those professing Christ who seek His peace in their day.

Prayer

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
The Bible tells me so.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
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PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

17 David Fambrough, Greenville, NC (CH)
18 Nick Clanton, Charlotte, NC (CH)
18 Hank Demous, Opelika, AL (CH)
18 Jesus Garcia, Reddick, FL (CH)
18 Danny Garnett, Irmo, SC (PC)
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)

OCTOBER 24

O How I Love Jesus



Rick Sample

Field Personnel in the San Francisco Bay Area, California

I've always loved hymns. I like to say that I've been going to Baptist churches since nine months before I was born. My earliest church memories were singing the hymns. In the church where my father was pastor when I was a preschooler, on Sunday nights, they had the congregation request the hymns that would be sung. As a four-year-old I always requested (every Sunday night) "O How I Love Jesus." Thankfully, that song leader was always patient with me and led that hymn. I begged to be allowed to sing in the choir one Sunday morning. I remember drowning in an adult choir robe and tripping on its hem as I walked proudly into the choir loft.

By the age of 12, as a precocious tween, I had memorized most of the hymn numbers in the Baptist Hymnal, 1956 edition. I used to entertain my friends with this very specific and very valuable knowledge. "Go ahead, test me." #41 To God Be the Glory. #95 Glory to His Name. #143 I Will Sing of My Redeemer. #196 I Must Needs Go Home by the Way of the Cross. #300 Let the Lower Lights Be Burning. #482 When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder. The Christmas carols were #63-81. And, of course, #188 Amazing Grace. I could go on.

When I lived in Alabama, I always loved going with my grandmother to a good old gospel singing at her rural church. I sang in my high school choir and then in the Baptist Student Union (BSU) choir at Samford University. I've sung in church choirs in Michigan, Alabama, Texas, North Carolina and California. I always love the hymn arrangements in those choirs and we baritones usually had expressive vocal lines. I've always felt that the traditional hymns have such good theology and are very inspirational in the sense that they inspire one to greater faith. Sometimes when I pray, I pray through the lyrics from my first favorite hymn.

Prayer

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
it sounds like music in mine ear,
the sweetest name on earth.

Refrain:
O how I love Jesus,
O how I love Jesus,
O how I love Jesus,
because he first loved me!

It tells me of a Savior's love,
who died to set me free;
it tells me of his precious blood,
the sinner's perfect plea. [Refrain]

It tells of one whose loving heart
can feel my deepest woe;
who in each sorrow bears a part,
that none can bear below. [Refrain]

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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 Suzie, Southeast Asia (FP)
25 Alan Williams (S-South Carolina)
26 Dean Dickens, Emeritus (FP)
27 Robert Carter, Virginia Beach, VA (CH)
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)

OCTOBER 31

More than Enough



Lorna Fowler

2026 CBF Summer Intern at Ardmore Baptist
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

I'll never be more loved than I am right now.
Wasn't holding You up
So, there's nothing I can do to let You down.
It doesn't take a trophy to make You proud;
I'll never be more loved than I am right now.

Going through a storm, but I won't go down.
I hear Your voice
Carried in the rhythm of the wind to call me out.
You would cross an ocean so I wouldn't drown.
You've never been closer than You are right now.
(Let's sing it loud, y'all!)

You are Jireh, You are enough.
Jireh, You are enough.
And I will be content in every circumstance,
You are Jireh, You are enough.

Forever enough,
Always enough;
More than enough,
Forever enough.
Always enough,
More than enough.

—(Excerpt from "Jireh" by Maverick City Music)

At the end of each day, I like to journal to reflect and pray about the day I have had as well as for what is to come. Looking back on my entries, I find myself returning to a common theme: peace and worth. It is so easy to get caught up in the "noise" of everyday life and to place our individual worth on the outcome of each day. But in reality, our worth is so much greater.

In the difficult times, I find myself turning to music. One line in particular that I carry with me each and every day is: "I'm already loved, more than I could imagine, and that is enough." The first time I heard the song "Jireh" by Maverick City Music, I was a junior in high school. Now, as a junior in college, I look back and see the moments in which this prayer has given me the strength and peace I needed in that moment, from college applications, the chaos of senior year, moving away from home, choosing a future career path and the daily expectations and comparisons that come with being a college student. This prayer helps me to ground myself and see that no matter the outcome, we are loved, chosen and worth so much more than we can even begin to fathom.

Prayer

Lord,
Give me peace and calm the noise surrounding me.
Help me remember that my worth is so much greater than the outcome of this day.
Remind me that I am already loved,
more than I can imagine. Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

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

31 Abina Johnson, New Orleans, LA (CH)
1 Kasey Jones (S-CBF Global)
1 Lynne Mouchet, Johns Creek, GA (CH)
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 Jeff Lee, North Macedonia (FP)
6 Meghan McSwain, Winston-Salem, NC (CH)

NOVEMBER 7
I Then Shall Live



Jana Lee

Former Field Personnel in Larnaca, Cyprus

The words to "I Then Shall Live" by the Gaither Vocal Band mean so much to me. I often find myself both singing them and praying them throughout the day. Every line is beautiful, but the final lyric especially stays with me: "May You feed a hungry world through me."

These words have become a daily prayer and reminder of my purpose. In moments when I feel overwhelmed or uncertain, they re-center my heart and encourage me to simply be willing and available for God to work through me. I'm deeply challenged and comforted by the idea that even small acts of faithfulness can be used to nourish a hungry world, both physically and spiritually.

Prayer

I then shall live as one who's been forgiven.
I'll walk with joy to know my debts are paid.
I know my name is clear before my Father;
I am His child, and I am not afraid.
So greatly pardoned, I'll forgive my brother;
The law of love I gladly will obey.

I then shall live as one who's learned compassion.
I've been so loved that I'll risk loving too.
I know how fear builds walls instead of bridges;
I'll dare to see another's point of view.
And when relationships demand commitment,
Then I'll be there to care and follow through.

Your Kingdom come around and through and in me;
Your power and glory, let them shine through me.
Your Hallowed Name, O may I bear with honor,
And may Your living Kingdom come in me.
The Bread of Life, O may I share with honor,
And may You feed a hungry world through me.
Amen, Amen, Amen

—("I Then Shall Live" by the Gaither Vocal Band)

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

Nourishing a Hungry World

10,760

people served through children and youth education ministries

7,386

people served through agriculture and ecology ministries

CBF's 2025 impact reporting records these two glimpses of ministry through CBF Global Missions. Behind the numbers are students, families, farmers, congregations and local partners sharing knowledge, food, friendship and hope.

PRAY

Generous God, bless all who teach, grow, prepare and share. Keep us from measuring faithfulness only by what is large or visible. Open our eyes to hunger—physical, emotional, relational or spiritual—that we can notice today. Show us a loving action through which we can join your work. May you feed a hungry world through the gifts we offer together. Amen.

Birthdays this Week:

CH = Chaplain
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FPC = Child of Field Personnel
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S = CBF Staff Member

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)
9 Debby Bradley, Owensboro, KY (CH)
9 Charles Seligman, Lakehurst, NJ (CH)
9 Audrey Wilson, Durham, NC (CH)
10 Brooke, Waco, TX (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 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)

NOVEMBER 14
Come to Me



Dianne McNary

CBF Director for Mission Support Development

The past few years have been a time of change in my life: leaving my home of almost 20 years to return to the land of my birth; changing my job title and learning a new role within CBF Global Missions; learning how to be a "nana" to my grandchildren and how to be a mom to my adult children; caring for parents as they grow older; taking on leadership roles in my local church.

When my children were very young, I would sing to them as I rocked them. I had a "medley" of songs I would sing through over and over. "Jesus Loves the Little Children," "Jesus Loves Me," "O How I Love Jesus" and "There's Something About That Name." Music has always held an important place in my life. My parents encouraged me with piano and clarinet lessons. I was invited to join the adult choir at church as an early teen and learned to sing alto sitting by Mrs. Connie. Through music, I can find the words to express what I'm feeling.

During a church retreat in 2024, I was introduced to a song by Rory Noland. "Come to Me" feels like a conversation with God. This song comes to me when I need peace and comfort—like comforting my children when they were little ones. Psalm 46:10a reads: "Be still, and know that I am God." Stop and take time to listen to God as He speaks to you. Maybe you will hear Him through music or scripture or a book you are reading. Be still.

Prayer

In the quiet, Lord, I come;
Been invited by Your Son.
In the stillness I can hear
Jesus call me near.
Come to me, all you weary and worn.
Come all you heavy hearted.
My beloved child, come away for a while,
And you shall find rest for your soul.

Those refreshing gentle words
Feel like water for my thirst.
With a whisper in my ear
Jesus bids me draw near.
Come to me, all you weary and worn.
Come all you heavy hearted.
My beloved child, come away for a while,
And you shall find rest for your soul.

— ("Come to Me" by Rory Noland)

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S = CBF Staff Member

14 Katie Anderson, Louisville, KY (CH)
15 Elizabeth Eaton, Fredericksburg, VA (CH)
15 David Simmons, Harrisburg, PA (CH)
15 Eric Whitfield, Cheyenne, WY (CH)
16 Anita Snell Daniels, Emeritus (FP)
16 Margaret Harvey, Austin, TX (CH)
16 Edwin Hollis, Odenville, AL (CH)
16 Gloria Hopper, Monroe, NC (CH)
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)

NOVEMBER 21
Practicing Thankfulness



Keith Holmes
Field Personnel Emeritus

Prayers don't always include words. When our children were still too young to write, we started making a thankful chain in preparation for the American celebration of Thanksgiving. We cut strips of paper large enough for the children to draw on. Then, each evening after supper, we each put down at least one thing for which we were thankful. It's a family tradition we've continued. The chain starts out with just a few links. In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, it continues to grow. Guests at the Thanksgiving feast are invited to participate.

Our thankfulness does not end with Thanksgiving. Sometimes the chain becomes part of our Christmas decorations. And sometimes a portion of it wraps around our family bulletin board all year.

We've used these visual prayers of thanksgiving in other settings, too: at a weekend getaway organized by a church member for several refugees from Iran here in the Netherlands and at the annual face-to-face meeting of the CBF Europe Team. We've sketched our prayers of gratitude and hung them across the table where we gathered and where we broke bread. There is power in prayers of thanksgiving. And there's power in seeing those prayers, sketched one-by-one and linked together.

Prayer Practice
As a family, with a group or individually, create a "thankful chain." Add to it each day as new prayers of gratitude come to your mind and heart.

FOR HOME AND WORSHIP

Three Links of Gratitude

Before the week ends, add three links to your own thankful chain.

A PERSON: Name someone whose love or faithfulness has strengthened you:

_____

A PLACE: Name a place where you have felt welcomed, safe or close to God:

_____

A GIFT: Name one ordinary provision you might otherwise overlook:

_____

Write each answer on a strip of paper and link the strips together—or write them in the spaces above. As you name each blessing, pray:

For this gift, gracious God, I give you thanks.

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S = CBF Staff Member

21 Fred Madren, Indianapolis, IN (CH)
21 Janet Pittman, Emeritus (FP)
22 Becky Smith, Emeritus (FP)
23 Heather Hurd, San Antonio, TX (CH)
23 Katrina Martin, Jacksonville, FL (CH)
23 Julie Walton, Richmond, VA (CH)
24 Will Barnes, Savannah, GA (CH)
24 Lynn Brinkley (S-CBF Global)
24 Rob 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)

Presence Matters

Planting, tending and harvesting take time and effort. Building relationships takes time and effort, too. CBF believes that long-term presence is essential to making a meaningful impact in the lives of the people among whom our field personnel serve.

Your gifts to the Offering for Global Missions ensure the long-term presence of CBF field personnel.

In North Macedonia

CBF field personnel Alicia and Jeff Lee work with local organizations and ministries, supporting sustainable farming projects, providing counseling and educational support for families and students, caring for refugees and helping distribute food to families living in extreme poverty and people neglected by society.



Please Give Today

using this QR code,
through your church or at
www.cbf.net/presence

cbf

OFFERING FOR
GLOBAL MISSIONS

BECAUSE **PRESENCE** MATTERS



"Our ministry here is a ministry of presence. We want people to know that they are loved by us and—more importantly—that they are loved by God."

Jeff Lee
CBF field personnel
in North Macedonia

Transforming Abundance through Christ

I am the vine; you are the branches.
John 15:5

Join Prayer Associates

to support CBF ministries and missions through intercessory prayer

CBF Prayer Associates commit to pray for Global Missions field personnel, chaplains, pastoral counselors and ministry staff. Prayer Associates support the work of CBF close to home and around the world.

Monthly prayer updates are published directly on the CBF website and shared through the email newsletter, which features real-time personal updates, specific ministry prayer requests and monthly birthday lists.

Visit ***cbf.net/sign-up-form***



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