



Calvary Herald

MAY 2022 — VOLUME 53 — ISSUE 5

DON'T MISS YOUR SABBATICAL DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

A little more than two years ago, many members of our congregation opened their hearts and sifted through their memories to write devotionals for a sabbatical devotional guide. Unfortunately, the pandemic postponed our sabbatical plans. And since then, all those personal reflections, life lessons, and sacred recollections have been waiting for the day when they could be put to good use. Well, that day has finally arrived! And with the start of our sabbatical adventure just a few weeks away, the devotional guides are ready to accompany us on our journey of rest, reflection, and renewal.

We plan to begin distributing the devotional guides on Sunday, May 8. At first, there will be just one printed copy per family, but you can request as many digital copies as you'd like (available in pdf format) by sending an email to Pastor Alex (pastoralex4@gmail.com) or Billie Doyle (billie@calvarybcmntairy.org). Copies will be delivered to our homebound members by the deacons and other volunteers, and all other families who participate in the life of our church will be able to pick up their copy on Sunday mornings by visiting the table in the sanctuary lobby before and after worship, or by stopping by the church office during the week. When we get to the closing weeks of May and early June, remaining copies will be distributed to those who request them on a first come, first served basis.

Because the devotional guide was funded by our congregation's sabbatical grant, there's no charge! However, because the cost of producing a quality item was a little higher than anticipated, we are inviting anyone who'd care to do so to make a small donation for their copy, which will help to offset expenses.

Blood Drive May 22

Calvary will sponsor a Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, May 22 from 11 am to 3:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Your participation could help save a life. To schedule your donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org and use the sponsor code "Calvary," or contact Mary Jane Shelton at grayandmary@gmail.com.



We're grateful for all the people who helped make this devotional guide possible, especially those who composed the reflections it contains. But a special word of thanks goes out to Brenda Barfield, who did the proofreading, and to Vicki Fields at Pioneer Printing, who handled the printing. And a special word of remembrance goes out to Ray Goins, Jo Hodge, Zeo Stone, and Charlie Wagoner, who contributed to the guide but who are now experiencing the true rest, reflection, and renewal to which it testifies from their vantage point in heaven.

Rest ~ Reflect ~ Renew: *The Pilgrimage about to Begin*

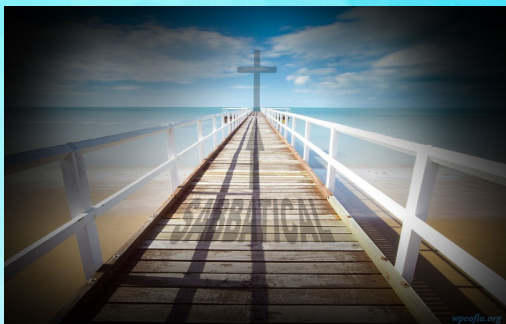
Over the course of the last three months, we've devoted a big chunk of our church newsletter to Calvary's upcoming sabbatical. We've reminded you of the lengthy prayer and planning process that has made the sabbatical possible. We've outlined the "congregational journey" that will allow us to learn from excellent speakers and to grow closer to God and to one another. We've described the "pastor's journey" that will give Pastor Alex the opportunity to take a much-needed break after 30 years of professional ministry, so that he can renew his spirit and can continue to serve and lead us well. But now—in just a handful of weeks—this "sabbatical pilgrimage" is about to begin.

Of course, we don't expect you to remember all the details. That's why – a little later this month – we'll distribute a "sabbatical guide" that will give you details about speakers, events, and the people you can contact if you have additional questions. But even more than we want you to know "Who, What and When?" – the question we'd really like you to consider in these final days of preparation is "Why?" Why would we (*and why would you*) invest yourself in this effort?

After all, it's about to be summer! People will be in and out of town on vacation. There will be beautiful days and pleasant nights, and plenty of opportunities to get out and do things you enjoy. Why would you try to keep track of what's happening at church (especially if the pastor's not going to be around to know if you showed up)? And why would you make it a priority to read our sabbatical devotional, and to attend our sabbatical events, and to pray intentionally about what God wants to do in your life and in the life of our church?

Well, as Pastor Alex has been telling us in his current sermon series, God blesses those "whose hearts are set on pilgrimage" (see Psalm 84:5-6). When we take the time to *rest* in Him, to *reflect* on what He's doing within and around us, and to be *renewed* by worship, growth, and fellowship; His Spirit brings about remarkable change in our hearts and lives. He creates within us springs of living water, which quench not only our own deep spiritual thirst, but which also enable us to bring Christ's refreshment to others. In other words, we can emerge from this sabbatical more prepared and better equipped to experience and share God's goodness and glory.

But here's the thing. We're not likely to get something out of this experience unless we're willing to put something into it. If we don't carve out some time to be together, if we don't listen to what God is saying through our speakers and events, if we don't seek God and discern what He's doing; we'll get to the end of the summer, and that's all it will be: the end of the summer. But it could be the beginning of a new season at Calvary, in which we get to see more clearly the "new things" that God wants to do in us and through us.



In the ancient Christian tradition that Pastor Alex will study this summer, many believers set off on a pilgrimage to find "the place of their resurrection." So, won't you join us in our pilgrimage, so that rest, reflection, and renewal can allow us to find new life in Christ?

Memorials

In Memory of Jo Hodge

Claudia Bryant
Lillie Mae Haynes
Lillian Holder
Guy and Mary Sparger
Owen and Sandra Stone

In Memory of Jolene Lawrence

Claudia Bryant

In Memory of Wilma Roberson

Lillie Mae Haynes
Lillian Holder
Guy and Mary Sparger

In Memory of Myrtle Wagoner

Claudia Bryant
Lillie Mae Haynes
Lillian Holder
Sheila Kegley
Rachel Ramey
Guy and Mary Sparger
Owen and Sandra Stone

The Personnel Committee Says...

Dear Alex Bracey,

Congratulations on your 10th anniversary with Calvary Baptist! Your love for the children and youth of our church is valued by so many families, and we're blessed to have you. Thank you, Alex, for your Christlike leadership!

Dear Beth Church,

Best wishes on your birthday, which falls on May 31st. Your musical gifts enhance our worship every Sunday, and we're grateful for the servant heart that you bring to your ministry. Thank you, Beth, for being a part of our music team!

A Devotional Sample

You can pick up a Devotional Guide later this month. But here's a sample to hold you over!

THE QUIETNESS OF TRUE POWER

by Dot Marion

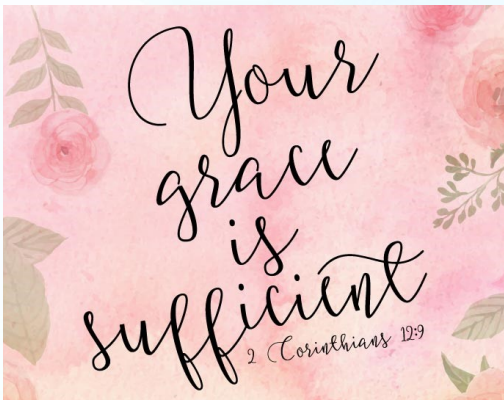
*"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee:
for My strength is made perfect in weakness..."*

2 Corinthians 12:9.

When have you felt hopeless? We let challenging times blind us from the truths we know about God and His promises. It was the year 2000, and my husband had suffered a stroke four years earlier. And now, he was being diagnosed with esophageal cancer. His surgery was scheduled and successful, but many complications followed. Days were long, and he was very ill (65 days to be exact). One of our sons lived three-and-a-half hours away and the other one nearby. But as days went into months, they needed to return to work and to care for their families. I never gave up and neither did my husband.

The day the surgery and the tests were completed, the doctor came to me and said "cancer." My strength and hope seemed to disappear. I had been there with my husband night and day for so long and my body was so tired. I went into the hallway in the hospital and 2 Corinthians 12: 9 came to me. It was as if God was standing there, telling me, "My grace is sufficient. I will never leave you." I held tightly to these words and kept my faith. Many days, months, and years (15 to be exact) followed before my husband went home to be with our Heavenly Father.

We all may one day face sickness and will certainly face death. Paul speaks of his own weakness and the thorn in his flesh. Weakness serves as a foundation for our life in Christ. As we face challenges in our lives, we must hold on to the truth that God's grace is always sufficient; He is our strength and our comfort.



Dear Calvary...

I wanted to say thank you for your love and support you have given me all my life. God is alive and working through all of us. I am blessed for all the opportunities of service and missions as well as relationships I have made there. I am proud to call you all my extended church family. Unconditional love from so many people is only possible though God and I am thankful for you all helping me meet Him.

In May I start my first full time job and won't be able to make it more than I have in college, but I will try to make it to see all of you and worship with you every chance I get. I love you all!

Ben Jarrell

The family of Myrtle Wagoner would like to thank you for the wonderful luncheon you served us after the service. It was delicious.

Jim and I are blessed because of You! We are truly grateful to be part of a church family who love and care for each other. Thank you for the cards and expressions of care and concern during Jim's surgery and healing. He is improving daily and already back to most of his normal activities. We hope to soon be back on the Harley.

Love to all and Thank you,
Jim and Lilnette Phillips

Thank you for the beautiful and delicious Easter Basket! It means a lot to be thought of in such a special way. I am thankful every day for my church family and pastor.

Sincerely,
Linda Gordon

I wanted to thank you for your kind donation of the hygiene bags. These were much needed and appreciated.

Thank you!
Celeste Hawks
School Counselor

Thank you for continuing to invest in students and for providing the hygiene bags.

Bless you all,
Debbie Nixon
NSHS Guidance Office Secretary