

tapestry

Faith
CHURCH

A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

Faith Church, a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

September 2026

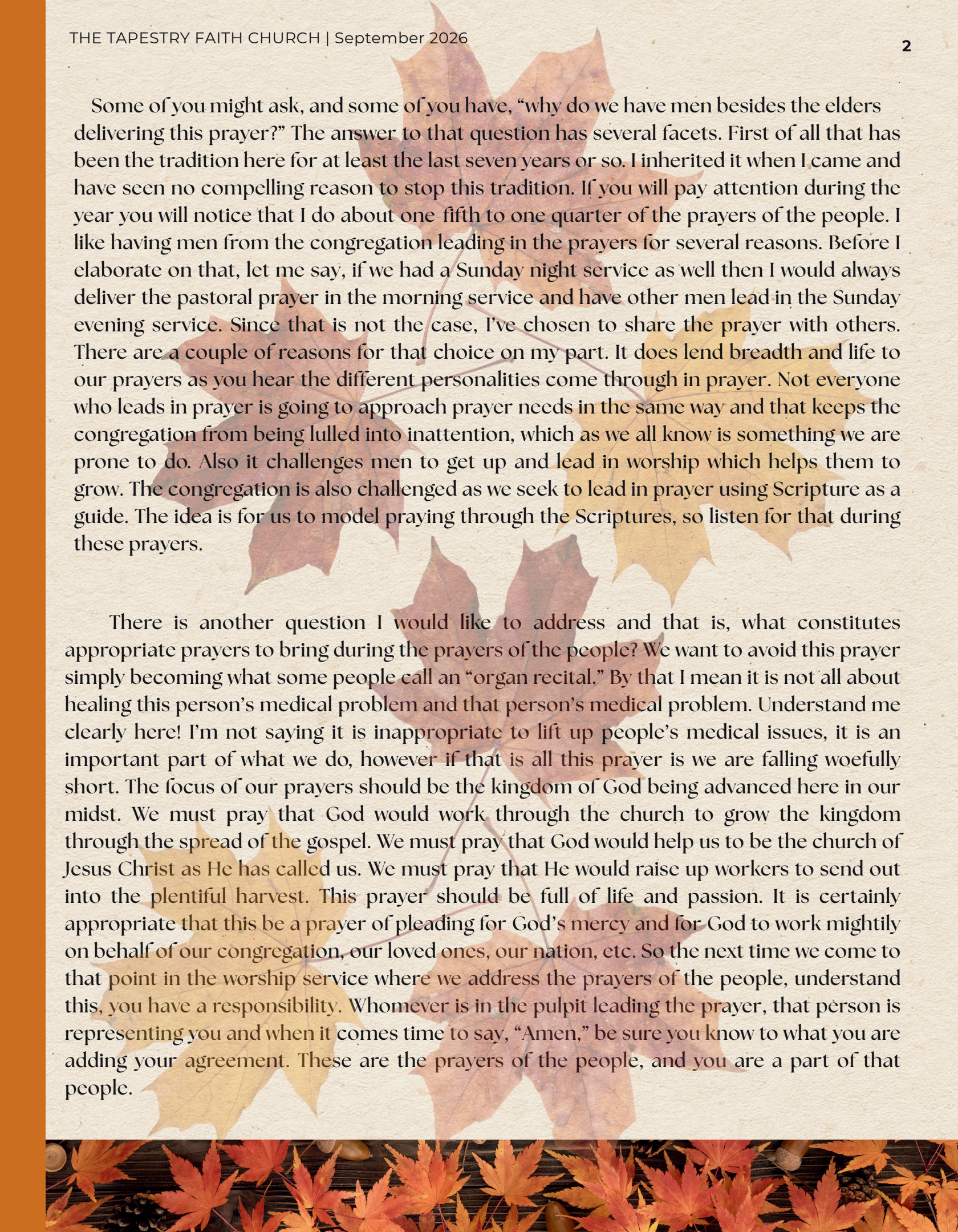
I wrote this article back in March of 2012 and it is still helpful as we move through talking about the different elements in our worship service. We now call the main prayer in our Sunday morning worship service the "Prayer of Intercession" whereas we used to call it the "Prayer of the People". The comments I wrote some 14 years ago are still apropos today, so I hope you will take them to heart.

March 2012

As is my custom in the Pastor's Pondering section of The Beacon, I am going to address one aspect of the worship service and this time it is the "Prayers of the People." I hope you have spent some time contemplating the prayers of the people and what that extended prayer is all about. If you have, then you are probably aware that the focus of this prayer is to lift up the petitions or requests of the congregation. In this prayer one man stands before God in prayer leading the rest of the congregation. The prayers raised by the one man are the prayers of the whole congregation. You may have noticed that the way we do the prayers of the people is different from many other churches. What we call the "prayers of the people" is most often called the "pastoral prayer" and is delivered by one of the pastors of the church. In other words one of the shepherds of the flock leads the people in prayer. As the Teaching Elder here at FRPC I would tell you that the pastoral prayer is as important to the life of the congregation as the preaching of the word. Such men as John Calvin and Charles Spurgeon agree with me, or more properly, I with them. Therefore this prayer must be taken very seriously. It is to be a reverent prayer, but that doesn't exclude it from being a joyful prayer.

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Some of you might ask, and some of you have, “why do we have men besides the elders delivering this prayer?” The answer to that question has several facets. First of all that has been the tradition here for at least the last seven years or so. I inherited it when I came and have seen no compelling reason to stop this tradition. If you will pay attention during the year you will notice that I do about one-fifth to one quarter of the prayers of the people. I like having men from the congregation leading in the prayers for several reasons. Before I elaborate on that, let me say, if we had a Sunday night service as well then I would always deliver the pastoral prayer in the morning service and have other men lead in the Sunday evening service. Since that is not the case, I’ve chosen to share the prayer with others. There are a couple of reasons for that choice on my part. It does lend breadth and life to our prayers as you hear the different personalities come through in prayer. Not everyone who leads in prayer is going to approach prayer needs in the same way and that keeps the congregation from being lulled into inattention, which as we all know is something we are prone to do. Also it challenges men to get up and lead in worship which helps them to grow. The congregation is also challenged as we seek to lead in prayer using Scripture as a guide. The idea is for us to model praying through the Scriptures, so listen for that during these prayers.

There is another question I would like to address and that is, what constitutes appropriate prayers to bring during the prayers of the people? We want to avoid this prayer simply becoming what some people call an “organ recital.” By that I mean it is not all about healing this person’s medical problem and that person’s medical problem. Understand me clearly here! I’m not saying it is inappropriate to lift up people’s medical issues, it is an important part of what we do, however if that is all this prayer is we are falling woefully short. The focus of our prayers should be the kingdom of God being advanced here in our midst. We must pray that God would work through the church to grow the kingdom through the spread of the gospel. We must pray that God would help us to be the church of Jesus Christ as He has called us. We must pray that He would raise up workers to send out into the plentiful harvest. This prayer should be full of life and passion. It is certainly appropriate that this be a prayer of pleading for God’s mercy and for God to work mightily on behalf of our congregation, our loved ones, our nation, etc. So the next time we come to that point in the worship service where we address the prayers of the people, understand this, you have a responsibility. Whomever is in the pulpit leading the prayer, that person is representing you and when it comes time to say, “Amen,” be sure you know to what you are adding your agreement. These are the prayers of the people, and you are a part of that people.

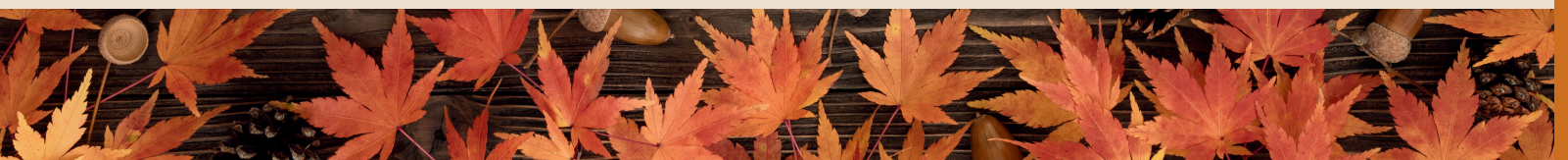
PASTORS PONDERINGS September 2026



“So it begins...” these are the words of Théoden King of Rohan at the beginning of the battle of Helm’s Deep. Another school year is upon us, and it is time for us to start things fresh in ministry. It is a busy time for me as the pastor and I’m sure it is a busy time for you as well. The summer is but a fond memory of Psalms and spiritual formation. Most of you understand the reference to the Psalms, but some of you may not understand the reference to spiritual formation. Let me say up front, it is not my intention to put any burden of guilt upon you, but if you want to put it upon yourself, I’ll leave that ball in your court. The spiritual formation I’m referring to is the Adult Sunday school class we did on the book, *A Heart Aflame for God*, by Matthew Bingham. If you have not had the opportunity yet to read this excellent book, I would certainly commend it to your study.

When you are on your death bed, what are the things you are going to wish you did more of and what are the things you will wish you would have dropped altogether? It is worth taking time to consider these things seriously, because these are things that will have major impact on your life. Do you for a moment believe that you will look back on your life and think, “I wish I had spent less time reading and meditating upon my Bible”? Do you think you are going to ever say, “I wish I hadn’t prayed so much”? Are you going to think, “I wish I had spent more time doom scrolling on Instagram”? No! You’re not going to think that. You are going to look back and want more time to be with the Lord in His Word and prayer. You are going to want to spend more time with your family and friends. While it is “today,” avail yourself of the opportunity to recognize those truths and do something about them. The time you spend in discipleship will never be time you regret. That is what it means to lay up treasures in heaven where thieves don’t break in and steal, that is laying up treasures that will never perish, spoil, or fade.

I know you are busy and I know that some of us, I’m including myself, need to do a better job of learning to say no to those things that are not of eternal significance. Maybe you feel overwhelmed by the whole concept and maybe you’re just not sure where to start with all of that. You are not alone and you are not without resources. If you want to learn more about how you can be more involved in your spiritual formation, how you can spend more fruitful and productive time with the Lord, please come talk with me about these things or you can talk with your shepherding elder. I couldn’t be more serious when I say, it is our deep privilege to talk about such things and to see the congregation growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. A new school year has begun and with it a new year of ministry, don’t be left out, come and make the most of it. May God bless us as we take up our cross and follow Jesus.



The Prayer Menu

by Terri Brierly

Do you ever get stuck in your prayer life? Does it seem stale? Do you ever think, I don't know what to pray for? Maybe you are tired of praying the same rote prayers over and over? Do you only pray for other people, or maybe only for yourself? Perhaps you are fearful of public prayer. Last year in Sunday evening church we studied Paul Miller's book, "A Praying Church". One chapter covered prayer menus. It is helpful to have different formats of praying because we are different people and do not pray the same at all times. Over the next months, I will share some of the information from his book, The Word, some very traditional prayers, some from my own prayer-life experience, and yes, some ideas even from the internet. I hope that you will find something in "The Prayer Menu" to invigorate your prayer life. And ladies, our summer book read will be, Paul Miller's, "The Praying Life".

*Please note that it is not my intention to teach regarding any of the following. I will add my personal comments and suggestions. However, before we start, PLEASE remember that prayer is an "individual's consistent, personal, and ongoing communication and relationship with God...extending to an awareness of his presence throughout the day."

Let's start with some very familiar traditional prayers. -"The Lord's Prayer" is Christ's very own model of prayer for us.-Mt. 6:9-13 -"ACTS"-Adoration (Praise God), Confession (Admit Sin), Thanksgiving (Express Gratitude), Supplication (Make requests) -"The Valley of Vision-A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions" You may be familiar with some of these prayers from our worship service. This guide is a rich source of prayers to the Triune God, along with repentance and reconciliation, grace, service, and so much more. Find your copy on Amazon.

- PRAY-P-Pause. Stop what you are doing. Be still. Invite God's presence where you are.
- R-Rejoice-praise, worship song, psalm, thankful prayer
- A-Who or What is on your heart today? Ask for what you need and the needs of others.
- Y-Yield-Give everything back to God. Worries, fears, uncertainty.
- BLESS-Body, Labor, Emotions, Social, Spiritual (Pray these 5 things for 5 people for 5 days)
- BODY, SOUL, and SPIRIT-
- BODY-Ordered steps and contacts with others
 - Protection from illness or injury
 - Healing of illness or injury
 - Strength
 - Proper Growth
 - Body would be used and honored as the temple of the Holy Spirit
- SOUL-Protection from ungodly sights, sounds, and influences
 - Teachableness
 - Wisdom
 - Maturity
- SPIRIT-Protection from temptation and deception
- Love for God
- Discernment
- Quick repentance

Join me for more ideas to bring newness to your prayer life as we continue this series over the next few months!

Featured NEWS

OF FAITH CHURCH



Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Colombia following the devastating 7.4 magnitude earthquake. The church in Sevilla has collapsed and is a total loss, but we are thankful that Eduardo and Angela are safe and that the church has already found a new place to meet.

Thousands of people have been affected, with homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and other buildings damaged. Please pray for the affected families, for wisdom for church leaders, and for strength as our partner churches minister to their communities.

We are also collecting financial support for the affected churches within Iglesia Betania.

Donate to the Colombia Relief Fund

<https://faithreformed.org/give>

Featured RECIPES

OF FAITH CHURCH

Shoyu Chicken

by Shirley Bell

Stove top

Cook time 45 mins

- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 ½ cups soy sauce
- 4 ½ cups water
- 1 inch ginger root, grated
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pinch of Chinese five spice
- 5lbs chicken parts

Mix all ingredients, except chicken, in a large pot; bring to a boil. Add chicken parts and cook for 45 minutes or until chicken is tender.

Serve.

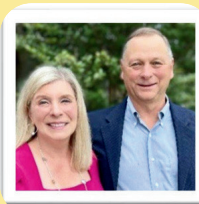
Note: To save Shoyu mixture, skim fat from the top, strain and freeze. To re-use the mixture, bring it to a boil, add chicken and cook as above.

MEET YOUR *Committee Chairs*

Get to know the wonderful people, and their families, who serve and lead at Faith Church!



George & Chris Johnson
George- Finance



Greg & Christine Stalnaker
Christine- Women's Ministry

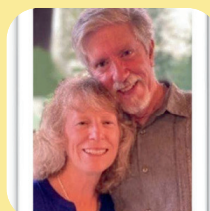


Rich & Grace Rochford
Rich- Safety & Security



Matt & Megan Yost
Matt- IT

Kids-Anna, Lydia, Thomas, Martha



Tom & Betty Maestri
Tom-Building Committee



Bert Hauver
Global Missions
Susan Hauver
Christian Discipleship



Bruce & Terri Brierly
Bruce- Disaster Response



Bob Miller
Local Missions



Quentin Johnston
Worship Planning

Following God's Orders

From the Voice of the Martyrs

7

As a young soldier in the Iraqi army, Zanyar had fought in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88) and participated in numerous other wars and conflicts, eventually rising to the rank of general. He became a part of the armed forces of Iraq's Kurdish minority, a group hated by the country's oppressive leader Saddam Hussein. When U.S. forces invaded in 2003, Zanyar was not involved in the fighting. Later, he fought side-by-side with U.S. soldiers against Islamic extremists.

By 2010, he was in command of 350 soldiers and had earned commendations from the U.S. Army for his assistance. But in 2017, a conflict erupted between the main Iraqi army and the Kurds, and Zanyar's hometown fell into the Iraqi army's control. Zanyar and his family, along with 12 other Kurdish families, were suddenly homeless. As they headed to another part of Iraq without any belongings, few people helped them. During that crisis, the only people offering aid were some followers of Christ, and their care deeply touched him. "I saw the people who help are Christians and they are different. During the war, when we had a need, they helped," Zanyar said. "I wanted to know why."

Throughout his life, Islamic leaders had told Zanyar that Christians are dirty people to be despised and that their churches are filthy. But he had personally experienced love and care. Zanyar's spiritual struggle reached its apex on Oct. 16, 2017, when he stood at the door of a church wearing his full military uniform and went inside. That day he placed his trust in Christ.

Zanyar's attitude toward others, including his wife, changed dramatically. "Now I understand that God loves us," he said. "I understand now how joyful we can be and [that] God wants to rescue all sinners." Through his testimony, his wife, Noor, and other family members also became Christians. When his superiors learned of his decision to follow Christ, they ordered him to fill out a form declaring his religion. "I was in the army for 31 years and nobody called me for a conversation like that," he said. Though he knew it would likely result in a backlash, Zanyar formally identified himself as a Christian. After completing the form, he didn't hear from his superiors for several months. Eventually they called him. "They said to me, 'This is really bad. You are a kafir [an infidel]; you are a traitor!'"

Zanyar knew that if they wanted to, his superiors or anyone in the government could order him to be killed. Still, he refused to recant. So they immediately demoted him and assigned him to menial tasks like taking out the trash. They also significantly reduced his pay. Though Zanyar's new salary was barely a living wage, he accepted his new role because he would not turn his back on Christ. And even this has become an avenue of blessing. To help compensate for his reduced pay, Zanyar's church connected him with members of the global body of Christ who have since helped him and his family. Zanyar's understanding of God's love has altered his personality as much as his religious beliefs. "In the past I was very angry; now I am not. Until your heart changes, you are not a believer. I changed a lot. Thousands of changes."

He loves to tell others the reason why his anger was replaced with love. "I am learning that our life is to share the gospel," he said. "This is what God wants from us. If faith doesn't change you inside, there is no faith." Zanyar asked for prayer for his ministry and for his family. Having lived as a soldier for so long, he isn't afraid to carry out Christ's Great Commission. But he does have concerns for his family and asked for prayer for their safety.

Faith Family Page

HAPPY BIRTHDAY September

- 1 Arliss Veldhuizen
- 1 Kathy Wagner
- 5 Gillian Howe
- 6 Ed Hale
- 8 Ezra Newman
- 11 Brynlee Wilson
- 15 Juan Ochoa
- 16 Susan Guynn
- 17 Adelaide Wilson
- 19 Felicity Adams
- 20 Jade Messinger
- 20 Janet Seabolt
- 23 Patrick Ortiz
- 24 Griffin Paugh
- 28 John Nicodemus
- 28 Kaitlin Wright
- 29 Cheryl McAdams



Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die; **a** time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; **a** time to kill, and a time to heal; **a** time to break down, and a time to build up; **a** time to weep, and a time to laugh; **a** time to mourn, and a time to dance; **a** time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; **a** time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; **a** time to seek, and a time to lose; **a** time to keep, and a time to cast away; **a** time to tear, and a time to sew; **a** time to keep silence, and a time to speak; **a** time to love, and a time to hate; **a** time for war, and **a** time for peace."

Happenings

WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:00pm Youth Group
- 5:30pm Evening Worship

Every Other Tuesday:

- 12:00pm Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays:

- 12:00pm Men's Lunch Bunch
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 7:00pm ESL Ministry

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Fellowship

Saturdays:

- 10:30am Downtown Christian Fellowship

MONTHLY

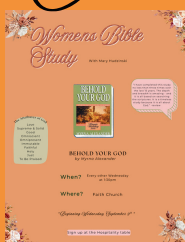
Third Saturdays, (19th)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study **

Third Sundays, (20th)

- 12:30pm Fellowship Meal

Coming Events



8158 Yellow Springs Road.
PO Box 8158 Frederick, MD
21702

Sunday School for All Ages 9:15am
Worship Service 10:45am
Evening Worship, 1st Sundays 5:30pm

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301-662-0662

