

# Devotional Readings

February 2011



To hear a recording of these readings,  
call the regular church office number (314) 965-2349 and push 110  
as soon as the answering message begins.  
The recordings will change daily. Please call for the recorded readings only  
before 8 am or after 5 pm.

**Lord**, in all our decision-making  
as a Church, as families and as disciples of Christ,  
Your will be done.  
Lord, in the choices of  
what we do, what we see, the friendships we foster  
and the ways we cultivate them,  
Your will be done.  
Lord, in sifting through  
our dreams and ambitions, our career choices,  
our lists of priorities, and  
our goals for ourselves and our families,  
Your will, your perfect will be done, as we live life to Christ's glory.  
Amen.

"Responsive Act of Submission," Bryan Jeffery Leech

**Almighty God,**

you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our  
common supplication to you: and you have promised through your  
well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his  
name, you will be in the midst of them.

Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us;  
granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to  
come life everlasting. Amen.

"Prayer of John Chrysostom," *The Book of Common Prayer*

Teach us, **good Lord**, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to  
count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to  
seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, except that of  
knowing that we do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

"For Grace to Serve Selflessly," Ignatius of Loyola, 16th century

These prayers are included in [The Worshiping Church, A Hymnal](#)  
on pages 572, 625 and 667.

# Devotional Readings

February 2011

## Kirkwood Baptist Church

Kirkwood, Missouri

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Please use the readings in this booklet to help you focus on the themes of prayer, faith and sacrifice during these three weeks. The readings are a treasure of personal thoughts and experiences that members of our church family are allowing all of us to share. These are gifts.

Read. Ponder. Pray.

As you are about to pray, look over the suggestions on the back cover of this booklet to help you remember the many people of our church, and also the ministries of Kirkwood Baptist that happen day by day.

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Sunday, February 6

*Blessed by the Sermon on the Mountain*

Several years ago I applied for and got a position in a private school in Haiti. During my first visit I stayed in a local hotel. One evening after retiring I was awakened by excited voices and laughter. Obviously, these people were having a good time - at the expense of my sleep! The next day I met the new guests, three married couples from Alabama. They were part of a mission trip scheduled through their Southern Baptist church. We found ourselves getting along very well. They invited me to attend a church service with them the following Sunday morning. The church we would be attending was in a remote village on top of a mountain. Most of the inhabitants in the village had never seen white people.

Our trek up to the top left us panting for breath. It was a great relief when we finally reached our destination. As we crested the top we were met with an awesome sight in front of us. Seated on the ground in a large open area were our hosts, the congregation. They varied in ages and shapes. Their clothing was ragged, but clean. They greeted us repeatedly with big smiles and warm handshakes. I felt like I was among long time friends. The men of the mission team and the interpreter began the sermon. The Haitians, old, young, babies and the infirm, listened quietly, attentively. As the service was finishing, the people began to sing songs unfamiliar to me. It was obvious the melodious beauty of the songs was coming from the heart and the soul of each one. These people did not possess any material wealth, but the love of God shone through in their presence, their songs, and their faces. I have no words to describe my emotions that morning. I was so touched and moved by the total experience. I have been in many churches, beautiful churches, but I believe as I sat in the midst of one of the world's poorest peoples, on the ground, without any walls, I was in the presence of God.

Patricia Bubash

*Lord, I know that we are all your children. Teach me to see the beautiful family of faith you have made for me.*



Monday, February 7

A song that I enjoy because it expresses the sovereignty of God.—David Stephens  
"Sometimes He Calms the Storm", by Scott Krippayne

All who sail the sea of faith  
Find out before too long  
How quickly blue skies can grow dark  
And gentle winds grow astrong.  
Suddenly fear is like white water  
Pounding on the soul;  
Still we sail on knowing  
That our Lord is in control

Sometimes He calms the storm  
With a whispered peace be still.  
He can settle any sea  
But it doesn't mean He will.  
Sometimes He holds us close  
And lets the wind and waves go wild;  
Sometimes He calms the storm  
And other times He calms His child

He has a reason for each trial  
That we pass through in life,  
And though we're shaken,  
We cannot be pulled apart from Christ.  
No matter how the driving rain beats down  
On those who hold to faith,  
A heart of trust will always  
Be a quiet peaceful place.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11



Tuesday, February 8

*“Be Still and Know...that I am God.”*

*Psalm 46:10*

As a hospital chaplain, I periodically was called to provide guided imagery for a patient who was anxious or whose medical treatment was impeded due to an inability to relax. Now in retirement, I continue to be on-call as a volunteer to provide what I consider to be a spiritual and healing treatment for others.

There is nothing magical about guided imagery. In fact, it is an outgrowth of prayer and meditation. Medical science is finding that prayer, quiet time, or meditation, rather than being detrimental to healing actually promotes and allows the body to heal. Larry Dossey, M.D., states that to “omit the spiritual element from our medical worldview is not only narrow and arbitrary, it appears increasingly to be bad science as well.” Herbert Benson from Harvard Medical School talks about the relaxation response which can come about as a result of listening prayer, and meditation “can actually alter gene activity—the way that genes express themselves and thus influence the body.” Andrew Newberg, a neurologist and researcher, talks about how God changes your brain (physiologically and emotionally.) Bruce Lipton, a researcher in the field of genetics, has come to some startling discoveries that our beliefs can affect our genes - which control the fate of our cells.

In short, prayer, and especially the listening or quiet prayer of meditation, has an impact not just upon those for whom we pray but upon us, our health and well-being.

So the daily practice of 10-15 minutes of quietness, where we still or relax our bodies, and as a consequence still our minds and then our spirits, allows us to follow the Scriptures’ encouragement to “Be Still and know that I am God”. After all, do we really want a one-sided relationship? Do we want to spend most of our conversation with the most important Person in the universe by talking, telling, asking? When we listen, we are passive and ready to receive. We allow ourselves to hear the “still, small voice” and receive guidance, direction, inspiration, hope, peace and yes, discover more fully the love that God has for us. (cont'd)



(continued)

It is difficult for me to be still. Activity, racing thoughts and anxiety about completing tasks is so much a part of me. But when I am still, I find that I become more whole and healthy. My encouragement is both for myself as well as for you. “Be still and know”!

Jim Layman



Wednesday, February 9

*Feeling Safe*

Some people share about times God has made profound impacts in their lives, or shared miraculous incidents. Others have experienced life-changing events. For me, the messages of love, understanding, acceptance and humor spring from the Saints in my life.

When I was 16 and had just gotten my driver's license, my mom wrecked the family car. When Deacon Warford Gladden heard about it, he left his Sunday School class to post a large sign on the car that read "Bev didn't do it"!

Mr. Parker, the school superintendent, advocated to have women become deacons in my home church; he always nominated women. (My mother was first on his ballot.) He lived until his late 90s but never could get that passed. However, he told me before he died that while on the church By-Laws Committee he changed the by-laws so the language did not prohibit women from serving as deacons. No one knew this until I mentioned it at his funeral.

And, currently, my favorite quote from a Saint was from one of the KBC middle school boys when we were studying the book Tent of Meeting (in a makeshift tent): "I like it here - I feel safe here".

Perhaps this is what being in a community of faith is all about - love, acceptance, understanding, and "feeling safe."

Bev Bates

*"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."*

I John 4:7

Our church feels like a family because...  
We all care about each other  
and help each other just like  
a family  
-Bev



“Here, Master, in This Quiet Place”

*Here, Master, in this quiet place, where anyone may kneel,  
I also come to ask for grace, believing you can heal.*

*If pain of body, stress of mind, destroys my inward peace,  
in prayer for others may I find the secret of release.*

*If self upon its sickness feeds and turns my life to gall,  
let me not brood upon my needs, but simply tell you all.*

*You never said "You ask too much" to any troubled soul.  
I long to feel your healing touch - will you not make me whole?*

*But if the thing I most desire is not your way for me,  
may faith, when tested in the fire, prove its integrity.*

*Of all my prayers, may this be chief: Till faith is fully grown,  
Lord, disbelieve my unbelief, and claim me as your own.*

Fred Pratt Green  
The Worshiping Church, A Hymnal  
p. 408



Thursday, February 10

*“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 minds in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:6-7

I truly discovered these promises one cold January night many years ago. I was 41 years old, staying at Barnes Hospital the night before surgery for possible breast cancer. To say that I was afraid (with a worried husband, two little girls and concerned parents) is an understatement. I was terrified! I opened my Bible to find some comfort and turned to this scripture in Philippians. I knew it was not by accident and I clearly remember sensing my Heavenly Father’s presence; with that came some calmness and peace. I wasn’t alone. My prayers were answered, but not exactly as I had hoped. It was cancer and I had to adjust to the trauma, but the peace and presence of Christ took me through the months ahead. The experience proved to be a lasting blessing. My parents are long gone, the girls are grown, my husband had experienced some severe health problems, but throughout the many ups and downs of life, the comfort of prayer and the peace that can follow have sustained me.

I confess that I tend to be a first class worrier, but this passage from Philippians has surrounded me with God’s promises and comfort. Jane Pirtle

*Thank you, Dear God, for your assurance that you are always with us. Help all of us to dwell on your promises rather than our problems. Amen.*



Friday, February 11

*Toward Sacrifice: Making Sacred*

In Ethel Missouri, everyone knew him. Unassuming, yet towering, Oral Hawkins was a loved and respected teacher, school administrator, Bible scholar, church elder, and farmer. He spent his life making a difference in the lives of many in a rural community in Northeast Missouri.

During free time, Mr. Hawkins often spent time writing. Toward the end of his life he created a collection of his work to be published after his death. Following is a poem that he composed, expressing a portion of his journey toward sacrifice, or setting himself apart, toward sacredness.

Mike Howe

NEVER

I will never.....

Lie and elaborately, knowingly cheat friends and neighbors.

Use vulgarity or profanity,

Tell filthy jokes.

Make fun of someone's misfortune.

Abuse a helpless individual.

Fail to visit the sick.

Fail to remember those in nursing homes.

Be envious of others' success.

Fail to commend someone who has succeeded.

Dislike someone who disagrees with me.



Cease to love my neighbors.  
Cease to love my family.  
Cease to vote.  
Compress my convictions.  
Hate someone, only their sin.  
Cease to express my view about political and  
moral issues.  
Dislike someone whose political and religious  
views are different to mine.  
Accuse someone without reason.  
Fail to pay my debts, if at all possible.  
Use anything which might destroy  
my health and living.  
Forget those who sorrow.  
Desert my Christian Faith.  
Cease to tell others about Christ.  
Fail to pray for myself and others.  
Fail to pray when asked by someone.  
Cease to believe in the Father, Son  
and Holy Spirit.

Our church feels like a family because... we  
all care about each other  
-Ann



Saturday, February 12

### *Giving*

What does it mean to give? God has challenged me recently to more seriously think about giving. In a way it's related to KBC activities, but that's only a part of what I'm experiencing right now. Every day, I encounter struggles and choices. I have to decide how much time I'm willing to give, how much energy, how much, how much.

I'm not certain how long it's been this way, but we are battered about all day long by messages about giving. Give us your attention. Give us your business. Give us your feedback. Give us a rating. Is it any wonder that the meaning of giving is so confounding anymore? Why should we give? Why do we give? The concept of giving has been with us for generations. It's unfortunate that the meaning can become fractured in the world around us. The following are just a handful of scriptural passages that touch on giving.

*"A man will give all he has for his own life," Satan said. (Job 2:4)*

*"Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart...give me understanding to learn your commands...give me discernment that I may understand your statutes...give me understanding that I may live."*  
(from Psalm 119)

*"King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given bread from the street of the bakers each day until all the bread in the city was gone." (Jeremiah 37:21)*

*"What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" Judas asked.*  
(Matthew 26:15)



*“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water,” Jesus spoke.*  
(John 4:10)

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15)*

*“Fear God and give him glory...” (Revelations 14:7)*

Mercifully, God in all His glory sent His son to demonstrate giving beyond all imagining.

Becky Ray



Sunday, February 13

WHITE GRACE

Small white dots filter through the sky  
from the air above.  
They come so fast.  
As the dots grow and accumulate  
the brown of the earth is a silent white.  
I feel closed in.  
Yet, there is a majesty and strength  
and beauty in what I see.  
Softness is beneath my feet  
as I reach for the daily paper  
and a wonderland of extravagant beauty is before me.  
I lift my eyes to the sky, thankful for what I see  
and thank God for several days of rest and work  
accomplished from being snowed in.  
Quietness surrounds me and I make time  
to see this wonderful miracle.  
The stark black limbs are dressed in layers of snow  
and the branches lift their arms in praise.  
The squirrel's home is topped with a white roof  
and a tiny bird nest is open to the wind.  
As their homes sway with the wind  
larger crystals fall from above.  
Do we realize what a gift we have been given?  
As I child I loved the snow  
Noises of children filled the brittle air  
as snowballs flew



and we delighted in this infrequent miracle.  
As I grow older and perhaps wiser  
I cannot forget the power, the majesty and  
the grace of my loving God.  
When it snows, there is joy, joy, joy in my heart  
And the silence is awesome!

Nell H. Lockhart

Written on January 24, 2011

*“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me and  
I will be whiter than snow.”* Psalm 51:7

*“ Create in me a pure heart, O God and  
renew a steadfast spirit within me.”* Psalm 51:10



Monday, February 14

*So Send I You*

*“Peace be unto you: as the Father has sent me, even so send I you.”*

John 20:21

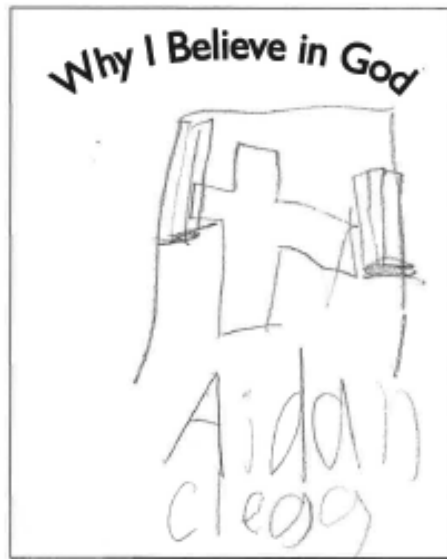
At the age of nine, I understood that I was in need of a Savior and acknowledged my sinful nature, confessed my sins, asked for forgiveness and asked that Jesus Christ become my Savior. A few weeks ago, my Adult Bible study class embarked on a study entitled “This Magnificent Salvation”. We have been reminded of the perfect creation of God and how one act of disobedience disrupted His plan. Throughout scripture we see how God has revealed Himself to His creation and stopped at nothing to reach us...rather than allow us to spend eternity without Him. I am thankful for my parents, for Sunday School teachers, pastors and friends who spoke this message of good news to me and nurtured me through times of doubt and hesitation. I am grateful for the calling to be a part of the plan of God in our world.

All around us are those who long for the God they do not know and we have the knowledge to unlock the mystery for them. I pray that I will not hold this message so close to myself that others will not know. I am reminded of the young Chinese woman who had given her heart to Christ and asked me if it would be all right for her to share this good news with her family. She stated it had taken more than thirty years for someone to share it with her and she was afraid it might be a secret that was not be shared.

Janis Dickerman



*Our loving Father, God, give me not only the good news,  
but also the boldness to share in the many  
opportunities you give me daily. Let your Love and Salvation not be a  
secret that I keep to myself. Amen.*



Tuesday, February 15

*The Bible Tells Us Why NOT to Give...*

The Bible tells us NOT to give...

because you think God will like you more.

(You can't love more than what was expressed in  
John 3:16.)

because you think God will do more for you.

(Micah 6:6-8 tells us what God wants.)

because you want to impress others.

(Jesus tells us to "give alms" in secret. Matt 6:1)

because you feel constrained to do so.

(Paul says God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9:7)

because you are rich.

(Jesus praised the destitute widow who gave her mite.  
Luke 21:1-4)

because it will up your chances for heaven.

(We are saved by grace through faith. Eph. 2:8-9)

because you'd rather not pay taxes.

(Better as a positive benefit than a motivation.  
Mark 12:17)

Why Give?! Faith, Hope, Joy, and Love.

The greatest of reasons is Love.

Scott Stearman



"Prayer Is the Soul's Supreme Desire"

*Prayer is the soul's supreme desire expressed in thought or word,  
the burning of a hidden fire, a longing for the Lord.*

*Prayer is the simplest sound we teach when children learn God's name;  
and yet it is the noblest speech that human lips can frame.*

*Prayer is the secret battleground where victories are won;  
by prayer the will of God is found and work for him begun.*

*Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air,  
our watchword at the gates of death; we enter Heaven with pray-  
er.*

*Prayer is the church's glorious song, our task and joy supreme;  
we name our Lord in every tongue, and praise is all our theme.*

*Jesus, by whom we come to God, the true and living way,  
the humble path of prayer you trod, Lord, teach us how to  
pray.*

James Montgomery  
The Worshiping Church, A Hymnal  
p. 620



Wednesday, February 16

*Head or Heart Belief?*

We were going to China on a sight-seeing tour. I prayed that God would let me help someone to know Jesus.

We had a flight from one city to another. I was sitting between Ray and a young Chinese man. We had found that many Chinese were anxious to practice their English with Americans. He was no exception. We talked for some time. He had a wife and a son.

I asked him, "What do you know about Jesus?" He answered, "He is God's son, and if you believe in Him you go to heaven when you die." WOW! I told him, "There is a belief in the head and a belief in the heart." His response was, "What is the difference?"

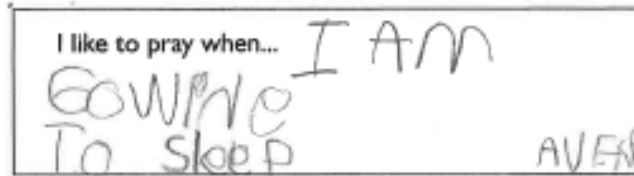
I shot a prayer for help with this one! God answered. *Ray and I had gone to the top floor of the CNN Tower in Toronto. There is a glass floor about 12' by 12'. You can see the ground far below. Many people were standing around the glass floor, and a few were walking across it. Ray and I joined hands and walked across together. Everyone there believed in their head, but only those who trusted in their heart were able to walk across. He understood.*

I asked if he was willing to pray and ask Jesus into his heart. He was and prayed. I prayed a thanks to God. With a radiant smile, he spoke with an excited voice, "Now we are brother and sister in Christ!" WOW!

Dorothy Hassler



Thursday, February 17



### *Praying as a Child*

I have been called on to pray in Sunday School, deacon meetings, prayed with friends and family in hospitals and even congregational led prayers. Sometimes we forget the sheer POWER of prayer, even for children.

When I was 6 years old I lost my green Schwinn bicycle. I searched everywhere for it. I fretted and fumed and exhausted all possibilities that a 6 year old could follow to find a missing bike.

I remember going to bed one night totally distracted by worry of where the bike could be. In desperation I prayed that God would help me find it. After I said "amen," it occurred to me that I didn't tell God where I wanted to find it. So I told Him to park it right outside the back patio door. I went to sleep feeling a little bit better.

The next morning I woke up and remembered my desperate prayer. I climbed down my bunkbed ladder and ran downstairs. There sat my bicycle parked behind the back patio door.

Coincidence or a miracle? I don't know. One thing I do know is that I prayed a very sincere prayer. God hears children's prayers too!

Jonathan Hickman



Friday, February 18

*Fullness in Christ*

Here is a devotional by Charles Spurgeon (1834-92.) I have enjoyed reading it from time to time because it provides a full perspective of our riches in Jesus and the salvation he provides.

David Stephens

*"From the fullness of His grace we have all received." John 1:16*

These words tell us that there is a fullness in Christ.

There is a fullness of essential Deity, for "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

There is a fullness of perfect humanity, for in Him, bodily, that Godhead was revealed.

There is a fullness of atoning efficacy in His blood, for "the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."

There is a fullness of justifying righteousness in His life, for "therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

There is a fullness of divine prevalence in His plea, for "He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."

There is a fullness of victory in His death, for through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

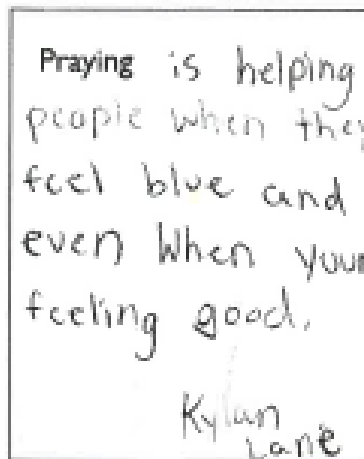
There is a fullness of efficacy in His resurrection from the dead, for by it "He has given us new birth into a living hope."

There is fullness of triumph in His ascension, for "when He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts



There is a fullness of blessings of every sort and shape; a fullness of grace to pardon, of grace to regenerate, of grace to sanctify, of grace to preserve, and of grace to perfect.

There is a fullness of all times; a fullness of comfort in affliction; a fullness of guidance in prosperity. A fullness of every divine attribute, of wisdom, of power, of love; a fullness which is impossible to survey, much less explore. "For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him," Oh, what a fullness this must be if all receive it! Fullness, indeed, there must be when the stream is always flowing, and yet the well springs up as free, as rich, as full as ever. Come, believer, and get all your needs supplied; ask largely, and you shall receive largely, for this "fullness" is inexhaustible, and is stored where all the needy may reach it, even in Jesus, Immanuel - God with us.



Saturday, February 19

*Anna Mae's Love*

*All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.  
I surrender all  
I surrender all  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior  
I surrender all.*

Hymn: *All to Jesus I Surrender*

*"Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee." Mark 10:28*

I'd like to introduce you to a woman named Anna Mae Dennis. She is no longer living, but she is alive in my memory for so many reasons. She loved Jesus with all her heart, and during a typical worship service at our church in Louisville, Kentucky, she would raise her hands to the sky during hymns when the Spirit moved her.

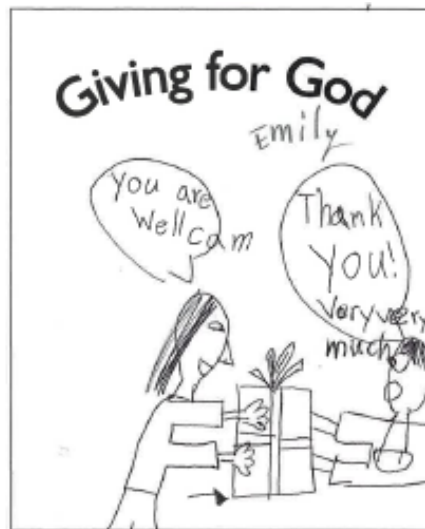
"All to Jesus I Surrender" was one of those hymns that moved Anna Mae to wave her hands. She was a kind, generous individual. She did not have a lot to give, but she gave a lot. In the years that I knew her, I received several gifts and tokens of her friendship. Out of the blue, she would hand you an envelope with a small item that she thought would please you. She did this with many people, not just me.

I remember on the day of her funeral that the pastor asked how many people in the room had received a small gift from Anna Mae. Dozens of people raised their hands. Those



hands in the air speak of the love of Jesus Christ. Anna Mae demonstrated her faith by raising her hands to worship and giving generously from what she had been given. Selfishly, I pray for myself to live with more generosity toward others, and I hope you have known an Anna Mae in your life.

Becky Ray



Sunday, February 20

*Standing in the Need of Prayer*

Chorus:

*It's me, it's me, oh Lord,  
Standing in the need of prayer;  
It's me, it's me, oh Lord,  
Standing in the need of prayer.*

Not my mother, not my father,  
But it's me, oh Lord,  
Standing in the need of prayer. (Chorus)  
    Not my brother, not my sister,  
    But it's me, oh Lord,  
    Standing in the need of prayer. (Chorus)

Not my elder, not my leader,  
But it's me, oh Lord,  
Standing in the need of prayer. (Chorus)  
    Not the preacher, not the sinner,  
    But it's me, oh Lord,  
    Standing in the need of prayer. (Chorus)

African American Spiritu-

al

I do need prayer. Every day. Not for health, finances, employment, or position, but for much more fundamental needs. I need prayer regarding:

- Attitude (It's not about me.)
- Will (I'm not the one in charge.)
- Perseverance (To finish what I start.)
- Compassion (To care for ALL of God's creation.)

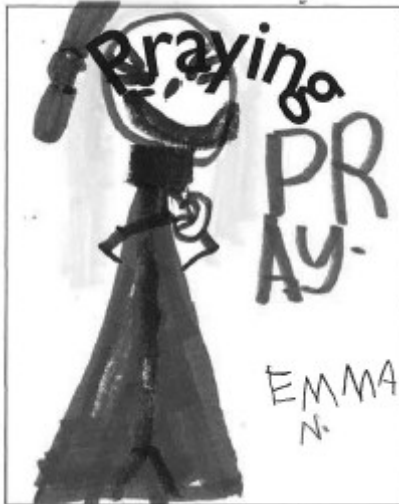


Wisdom (To see the world with the Mind of Christ.)

Faith (To maintain a constant,  
growing relationship with God.)

Jesus promises in John 14:14 that if we ask in His name,  
He will do it. May we pray for these traits in ourselves and in  
others so we can be a dynamic, growing congregation.

Marilyn Minich



Monday, February 21

*God's Plan*

After David finished grad school in 1978, he accepted a job with Monsanto, which brought us back to St. Louis to live. I didn't have a job yet, since I wanted to spend time working on our new apartment. Besides, we had Nick, who was almost a year old, who would need child care. I looked at the want ads in the paper, and noticed a Physical Therapist job opening at St. Joseph Hospital in Kirkwood. I remembered that a friend from PT school had worked there, so I gave her a call. She suggested I call another college friend, who was the assistant director of the PT department at St. Joe's at the time. I called Vickie that evening to ask about the job opening.

Vickie said that she was having a prayer meeting at her house that evening with her boss, a nun, and some of their friends. They had just prayed about finding a PT to fill the job opening since they were very busy and short-handed. I went in the next day for an interview, and was hired on the spot; they thought I was "Heaven-sent"!

I called David at work to tell him I had a job when I could arrange daycare. He mentioned my new job to a co-worker he had just met, and mentioned that we would need to find child care. The man said his wife was just talking about maybe starting to watch children in her home, so David gave her a call. In no time, we made arrangements.

All of this happened in response to the prayers of a group of friends who worked at St. Joe's. It wasn't my prayer request, but I reaped the benefit of it by getting a great job where I stayed for 28 years before my retirement.

Susan Eaton



Tuesday, February 22

*Giving Thanks for Everything*

Here is a statement that has meant a lot to me in striving to give thanks for both good and adverse things as we are instructed to do in Ephesians 5:20,

*"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

This passage is from seven hundred years ago, and is reprinted in Heaven, My Real Home, by Joni Eareckson Tada, on page 193.

David Stephens

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take heaven.

No peace lies in the future that is not hidden in this precious little instant. Take peace.

The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, within our reach, is joy.

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging it's gifts by their coverings, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love and wisdom and power. Welcome it, greet it, and touch the angel's hand that brings it.

Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, a duty; believe me, that angel's hand is there, the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing Presence. Our joys too; be not content with them as joys. Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find earth but cloaks

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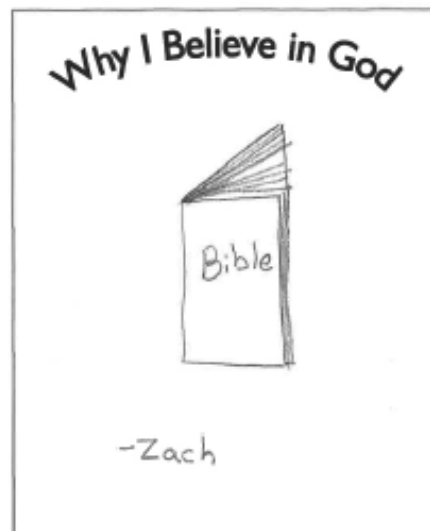


your heaven.

Courage, then, to claim it, that is all! But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims wending through unknown country on our way home.

Fra Angelico

1387-1455



Wednesday, February 23

*Apprenticeship in Giving*

As did many of you, I learned about giving from my parents. For me, this was especially true when it came to giving to the church. It seemed that most of the time we were either at church or working on something for the church. Those projects ranged from helping with Vacation Bible School, and taking our turn cleaning the church on our assigned Saturday, and reupholstering the high chairs for the fellowship hall, to turning on the baptistry heater on Saturday (so it would be warm on Sunday), and turning off the lights and locking the doors after every service or event.

Who knew that when my mom made my sister and me stand in line at the store with the greatly discounted giant packs of toilet paper that she was purchasing for the church (only one per customer, you know,) she was teaching us to be good stewards. (At the time we were just embarrassed that our friends might see us buying all of that toilet paper).

In addition to teaching us to give of our time, our parents also taught us about tithing with our money. I remember Dad explaining how to figure out my tithe from my allowance and babysitting money. Of course, he led by example as he would write his check on Saturday night and put it in his Bible so he wouldn't forget it on Sunday morning. I never remember a time when tithing hasn't been a vital part of my faith journey. In the seasons of my life when money was really tight, it wasn't an option to stop or lessen tithing. I have been so blessed and been given so much, I am often overwhelmed with gratitude, and this is just one way that I can give back.

Von Hulin



Giving to help someone else makes me feel... happy.

- James

I can feel God's love when... when  
bad things come toge-  
ther.

Miranda

Our church feels like a family because... every-  
one cares.

- Nate

Thursday, February 24

*Reassurance. Love. Comfort.*

There was a point in my life where nothing seemed to be going right and everything seemed to be caving in around me. I was in a very dark pit with no way out. I had no family to talk to or friends who would understand. I felt isolated and lonely. Many times I prayed to God asking for guidance, patience, reassurance ... for something. But nothing came.

One morning, like many mornings, I was sitting on the edge of the bed, legs drawn up and eyes closed, praying (or trying to.) But this time, words weren't coming, just tears. The tears finally ran out. Then I felt something – I was on someone's lap. Arms were being wrapped around me and drawing me closer. My head rested against His chest. It wasn't like a bear hug. It was a loving and gentle, but yet, strong embrace all at the same time. I felt small and I felt a love - a love that I don't remember ever feeling before. I just sat there - soaking it up. Letting this feeling overcome me all the way to the innermost parts of me. I was being taken care of and I, oh, so needed to be taken care of. I wanted to open my eyes to see but I didn't. This felt too good. When I finally did open my eyes, I was still sitting on the bed, alone. The feeling was gone. This whole experience probably lasted only seconds but it was long enough. God was the one holding me, loving me and comforting me. It was long enough to give me a calmness to see the situation as it was so I could make decisions. It was long enough for God to give me what I needed when I needed it most – His love and His comfort.

Cindy Midgett



Friday, February 25

*On giving...*

I was asked to give a talk about giving. I thought about how I really felt, and here's what I said:

"Giving for me, is a joy. It makes me happy to have (and, trust me, it's not some great amount of money that I contribute on my own) - it makes me *thankful* to have *anything* to give to the church, to God's work. Here's how I see it. This is how I've seen it for a long time. Anything I have, ANYTHING at all, was given to me by God. Therefore, anything I have is by none of my own doing. Had He not seen fit to equip me with what He has, health, some degree of sound mind, and the blessing of parents who believed firmly in education, I wouldn't have been able to provide for myself in Europe all those years and I wouldn't be able to work and contribute to our household. **He gave me the gift of being able to give.** And, let's face it: as Americans, we have so much more than so many...I consider much of what we have luxury. If the world were to change, if we were to suddenly find ourselves in some desperate situation, I would still want to give, even if it were only a widow's mite.

"And there's always the 'gross verses net' discussion. What is *that*? How could we quibble about a few (or more than a few for some) dollars with God who has given us EVERYTHING? I go by gross and I figure I still owe Him so much more. There's an old song whose most important line of text for me was "for I could never, never outlove the LORD." A long time ago, I changed that line to "for I could never, never outgive the LORD."

...

"As to the upcoming campaign and a time of giving SACRIFICIALLY, PAST the 10% tithe to help our church reach out to



our neighbors and world, I must admit, I was afraid... I didn't know what God might require of me, of us. I wondered if He would ask me to wear the same clothes and shoes for the next 3 years so that we could give until it hurt. When I told Scott about this, and we discussed what we thought the LORD had laid on our individual hearts to do, he, being the voice of reason, reminded me that if, at the end of three years, I was full of bitterness as I counted down the final "gifts" that we were giving, it wouldn't be a very fine witness or gift, at all. What good would *that* sacrifice be? As we discussed further, it amazed me, and made me thankful, that God had laid the same thing on our hearts: Scott's number was the finished amount; my number was the monthly gift. When he did the math, they were the same. It is more than just an "easy installment" made monthly to ease our conscience. But, it is also an amount with which we can live and at the same time learn to sacrifice for the Kingdom. I think it is an amount we can be *thankful* to give.

“It is our first time to invest in a church like this. It was a daunting thought for me, in the beginning. Our children, the future of KBC, are depending on us. HOW for God's Kingdom's sake, can I do other than give? How can you?

“In the letter that Scott sent out to all of us on Jan. 18th, he said, ‘This is only secondarily about money and buildings. It is **PRIMARILY** about the recognition of our mission and our need to lay a good foundation for the future.’ A-men and A-men.

Cecelia Stearman



Saturday, February 26

*Praise God!*

*Praise Him, Praise Him!*

*All ye little children,*

*God is love, God is love.*

*Praise Him, Praise Him!*

*All ye little children,*

*God is love, God is love!*

As a child, this was one of the many choruses I learned and sang often in Sunday School. There were other songs to remind me that praise is to be part of my communication with God. I often would start my prayers with a word of praise and then would realize that I was ‘praising’ Him for what He had done for me—something I had received from Him. I wanted to reflect on those attributes of God that stood alone and called forth praise on their own. I did not want my praise to be contingent on what He had done for me or could do for me.

I was reminded of something I heard during a revival many years before. The preacher suggested praying through the alphabet, beginning with A and ending with Z. This has been a helpful way to focus my praise and remind me that God is worthy of praise because of WHO He is, not WHAT He does.

*Praise Him, Praise Him.*

*Let all who hope in the Lord, praise His holy name.*

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me,  
bless His holy name.” Psalm 103:1*

Janis Dickerman



**Day by day this week, pray**

for all who need to make a decision to follow Christ, and for these people important in the life of our church.

- On **Sunday**, pray for: ministers and musicians as they lead our worship today; teachers as they finish preparations and lead in Bible study; those who are not able to be present with us today; all who seek to worship and learn; the Gateway Ringers and Gospel Choir members who come together in our building; our children and youth growing as musicians and as a Christian community.
- On **Monday**, pray for: all church members as we spread throughout the community as a Christian presence this week; our students at all levels back in local schools and also in universities in scattered cities; those who will be receiving and giving medical care this week.
- On **Tuesday**, pray for: our church staff in their meeting today as they plan their work within the church; children and tutors working together today and Thursday in Meacham Park; children and teachers in the WEE center; the PrimeTimers singing God's glory.
- On **Wednesday**, pray for: the choir and musicians as they practice this evening; teachers preparing for Bible study; Friendship International workers and their guests today; the many who meet in our buildings through the week for support groups and counseling.
- On **Thursday**, pray for: all volunteers for our church who are meeting in committees this week; deacons in their areas of service to the church; all who remember loved ones and mourn.
- On **Friday**, pray for: food pick-up workers and donors; men and women away from home serving our country; the secretaries, custodians, and volunteers who work to keep our church running.
- On **Saturday**, pray for: volunteers serving at the food pantry and all of our guests who come; Sasa and Mira Zivanov as they work in the local Bosnian community; governmental leaders and God's children in all lands; all missionaries around the world who give themselves to serve others in the name of Christ.