

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Through September and into October, our church family will be reflecting upon the many blessings God provides for us every moment and be invited to respond to those blessings with gratitude. This time prepares each of us to examine our lives and at the end, on October 4, respond by handing in an Estimate of Giving card which will be used to develop the 2027 budget, but even more importantly be a witness of our response to support the Kingdom of God as revealed through FUMC.



This publication is filled with daily devotions based around the theme of Gratitude, all written by members of our own congregation. We hope that we will each read, reflect, and pray over these devotions, then give thanks for the persons who wrote them and for God's work in us as well.

We also invite everyone to KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL (from September 1 - October 4). It's a simple practice that can be done on paper, on a computer, even on your phone or tablet. At the end of each day, write down three things for which you are thankful. Even better, encourage your children and each other also to write down three things for which they are thankful each day. In doing so, God has a way of changing our perspectives, because we begin to see where God is at work and where life is good. In a world where there is so much negativity, this simple practice can literally change our lives.

Our challenge is to do this, then as you feel so led, feel free to share with Pastor Tim, Pastor Emilee, fellow parishioners, friends, or even strangers what this experience was like for you and/or for your children. This in and of itself can become an expression of gratitude that invites others to live and think in the same way, thus making way for the Spirit to touch the lives of those round us.

When we are intentional to write down our many blessings from God, we will find that it has a positive effect on your daily life and your attitudes. And we might just see Jesus at work in us or through us in ways we might never have seen before.

We pray that this stewardship effort will be filled with many blessings, the greatest of which is that God would unite us as a congregation to become truly "cheerful givers," that give our time, talent, and treasure out of the gratitude of our hearts.

We look forward to hearing what God lays on our hearts and how God is calling us to respond to do the work Christ sets before us!

Pastor Tim
Lead Pastor

Pastor Emilee
Associate Pastor

Janet Hedrick
Team Lead, Generosity



September 1, 2026 – Janet Hedrick

Scripture: Psalm 118: 29 – Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever.

Devotion: At a District Lay Ministry Workshop, each person was asked to name something for which they were

grateful to God. Many spoke from the heart, but one participant said he was not grateful for where he was in life because he had worked hard to get there. His words reminded me how easy it can be to overlook God's hand in our lives.

I am grateful because every ability, opportunity, and blessing comes from God. Stewardship is one way I return a portion of what God has entrusted to me, offering it not out of obligation, but with a thankful heart.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for every gift you have placed in our lives. Open our hearts to give with gratitude, remembering that all we have comes from your love and care. Amen.

September 2, 2026 – Chris Silkensen

Scripture: Colossians 2:7

Devotion: Let your roots grow down into him, let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

We were married in June of 1971, and the roots of our marriage started! We built our lives around our three boys. As we grew older our faith grew and even when we didn't plan it God lead us in the right direction. As we look back God's plan is very evident in every detail. We have been very blessed by his love, and we are so grateful for all that he has given us by his mercy. With much gratitude we share our finances, time and love with our church and our community!

Prayer: May God continue to bless our marriage and our family as we continue to grow in our faith!



September 3, 2026 by Liz Lane

Scripture : Colossians 3:15

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful."

Devotion: For much of my life, I have felt a deep desire to "pay back" or "pay it forward" for my many God-given gifts. Of course, I know that God's grace cannot be earned or repaid. The blessings of life, faith, family, opportunities, and abilities are gifts freely given. Yet gratitude creates within me a longing to respond.

When I reflect on God's goodness, I realize that stewardship is about much more than financial contributions. It is about how I use everything God has entrusted to me. The talents I've been given, the experiences that have shaped me, the time available to me, the encouragement I can offer others, and the resources I possess are all opportunities to express gratitude.

Paul writes that we are to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts and to be thankful. Thankfulness is not simply a feeling; it becomes a way of living. For me, that has often meant sharing my gifts as broadly and as often as possible. Whether mentoring someone, volunteering, offering leadership, listening to a friend, or using my skills to serve the church and community, I find joy in giving away what God has first given to me.

Financial giving remains an important expression of stewardship, but I have come to see it as one part of a much larger response. True stewardship grows out of a grateful heart. When we recognize God's abundant generosity toward us, we naturally seek ways to bless others with the gifts we have received.

Christ's peace frees us from keeping score and from focusing on what we might owe God. Instead, it invites us into a life of gratitude, generosity, and service. The more aware I become of God's goodness, the more eager I am to share whatever I have been given for the benefit of others and the glory of God.

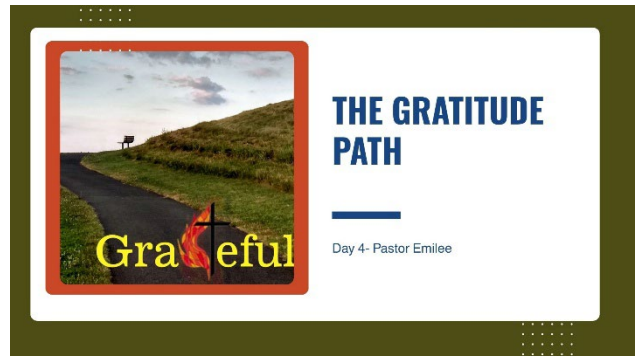
Prayer Gracious God, thank You for the countless blessings You have poured into my life. Help me live with a grateful heart and to faithfully share the gifts You have entrusted to me. May my time, talents, resources, and service reflect my gratitude for Your goodness and may my gratitude pour over those around me so that they may see all their blessings, too. Let the peace of Christ rule in my heart as I seek to bless others and honor You in all that I do. Amen.



September 4, 2026 by Pastor Emilee Ogden

Scripture: Joshua 3:5 Then Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

Devotion: Picture this: The Israelites have experienced liberation from slavery in Egypt, sustenance in the wilderness from God’s own hand, Moses and the stone tablets, all the while with the promise of a land of safety and abundance in their future.



The prophet Joshua, who took over leadership after the death of Moses, spoke these words to the Israelites the night before they were to cross the Jordan River and claim the Promised Land.

This is what they have been waiting for, what they have been promised!

They are waiting with great expectancy to see the fulfillment of the promise from God.

“Sanctify yourselves” — set yourselves apart for something special, something from God, trusting that God will act in miraculous and tremendous ways.

When we give our gifts — our money, our time, our energy, our prayers — to God’s church are we doing so with the faith that God will work wonders among us?

I invite you during this stewardship season to believe — truly believe — that God will work wonders among us.

Prayer: God who gives all, including your only Son, we give thanks for your generosity, provision, and abundance. Help us live our lives in such a way that we are expecting you to do something wonderful among us and with us. Ease our fear of scarcity and lead us to trust in your abundance. You are good and good to us. Amen



September 5, 2026-- Mochel Morris

Scripture: Luke 17: 15-17 -- 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 He prostrated himself at Jesus's[f] feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? So where are the other

nine?

Devotion: Amazed and filled with gratitude that he was no longer ailing, he stopped in his tracks, and turned back, to give thanks to God. Life can be so full that we don't even notice when we have been gifted. Noticing what God is offering us in our lives takes attention. It takes stopping in our tracks to bear witness, to open our eyes, our hearts, and our hands.

Do notice in the rest of this encounter that while Jesus remarks that only one—and a foreigner at that— takes the moment to give thanks, he does not take the gift away from the others. Hopefully, they too will notice sooner or later. Even if they don't, God's love is an intentional act in relational response to the need of others, working for overall wellbeing.

May I notice the gifts surrounding me. May my response be to stop, turn back, and offer my own intentional act that seeks overall wellbeing for others and all of Creation.

Prayer: Thank you for the gifts I notice and all the other ones I have failed to notice. May my eyes be opened to see you at work. May my hand be opened to be a part of your work. So be it.

September 6, 2026 – Pastor Tim Tate

Scripture: Malachi 3: 10 -- *10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.*



Devotion: The prophet Malachi shares the words above to God's people, and there are 2 implications that I believe we often miss. 1) Malachi tells them to bring the full tithe (10%) of their "income," and 2) that in doing so, it tests God but even more, it makes a way for blessings to flow.

Many folks can't imagine giving 10% or more, and those that do, tend to take the tithe out as soon as the funds go into the checking account. Out of sight, out of mind if you will. For my family, the 10+% that we give regularly helps us to prioritize our lives toward sharing faith. We are more attuned to the needs around us, and when a need arises, we are more willing to help. The coolest part of this all is that God has **always** made a way.

Now in order to give what we give, we have had to be intentional and disciplined in our household budgets, but for us it has been a blessing. When we didn't know how the bill was going to get paid or our family could do this or that, but when we have been faithful, God continues to provide, often in unexpected and unexplained ways.

I invite you to take some time today to just think about all that God has given you and your family. How might God be calling you to respond? Is God inviting you to reprioritize some spending? If you feel like this might be so, I challenge you to take the leap and just do it. Then see what God will do to bless your family and you.

Prayer: Gracious and generous God, You have given us more than enough, and the needs around us are more than we can meet. But You simply invite us to give in response to Your blessings. Give us courage to boldly respond, then overwhelm us as we watch You take what we give, and multiply it for Your work. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.



September 7, 2026- Nana Noi

Scripture: “Always give thanks to God the Father for everything.” — Ephesians 5:20

Devotion: Gratitude changes the way we see what we have. When we recognize that our lives, our abilities, our relationships, our opportunities, and even the strength to face

difficult seasons are gifts from God, generosity becomes more than an obligation. It becomes a response. Stewardship is sometimes understood simply as giving money to the church, but it is much broader than that. It is the way we respond to God’s goodness with everything God has entrusted to us—our time, our talents, our resources, and our willingness to serve. I have found that some of the most meaningful opportunities to give begin by simply noticing a need. Sometimes we give our time. Sometimes we share what we know. Sometimes we offer encouragement, hospitality, or practical help. And sometimes we give financially so that ministries can continue to reach people we may never personally meet. Ephesians reminds us to “always give thanks.” Gratitude is therefore not reserved only for moments when everything is going well. It becomes a way of living. When we give from gratitude, the question changes from “How much do I have to give?” to “How can I respond to all that God has given me?” Our generosity becomes an expression of thanksgiving—a way of saying, “Thank you, God. What you have placed in my hands, I am willing to use for your purposes.”

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for the many gifts you have placed in our lives. Give us grateful hearts and help us to use our time, talents, and resources generously. May our giving be a joyful response to your goodness and a blessing to others. Amen



September 8, 2026 – Katherine Counsell

Scripture: Psalm 100:4 - Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.

Devotion: When you spend most of your days surrounded by both books and children, they often guide your narrative. Last fall I was excited to discover a new book by one of my favorite authors. In *The Gift of Words* the reader is reunited with Jerome from *The Word*

Collector. Jerome loves to collect words, but as he searches for words to share with family and friends during the holidays he is uninspired. As he walks through the city he sees and hears words like, “buy now,” “sale, cheap stuff,” “storm,” “conflict,” “no loitering,” “I hate this weather,” or “I want it now!” Initially Jerome feels hopeless, but then he sparks an idea. He takes some of his most loved words from his collection to a bare tree in the park. Together, people create a joyful tree filled with hopes, dreams, and wishes as they choose words and phrases to hang. When I purchased this book, I did not realize the impact it would have on my students or myself. From lessons where we explored and shared gratitude to students making beautiful gratitude trees from simple supplies, the discussions and the enthusiasm with students and colleagues was priceless. Over the course of a few weeks, a theme throughout our school community was “Gratitude Is Universal!” Gratitude IS universal. This joyful scripture like the story is filled with words and a message of gratitude that we can apply to our own lives, our prayers, and our giving. In our church life giving comes in many forms from our time to our talents to our gifts. Our stewardship is one way to show gratitude to God’s goodness.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for hearing our prayers and for your love. We come to you with grateful hearts. Help us to look past our worries and see your faithful care. Amen

September 9, 2026 – April Wynn Reif

Scripture: Psalm 9: 1 – I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

Devotion: Are you a person that always has a plan and knows how things should be in your “mind’s eye”? I am – which inevitably leads me to lean into that inner perfectionist. However, life doesn’t work on human perfection, thankfully it runs on the perfection of God. As much as I want to control every detail, and make everything perfect, I give thanks every day that life doesn’t operate on my sense of perfection because it would be so very inadequate. Rather, God has infinite generosity, infinite wonder, and infinite love. This can be seen in the very fabric of our lives, from the trees and critters around us, to the smile of a friend or child, to the amazing things our hands can build when used in service of God. It also means that what we do in service of God is good, it is enough. There is never too small a gift, there is never an unwelcome offering when given from a generous heart! I encourage you to remember you are always enough as are your gifts of the spirit.



Prayer: God, thank you for all your wonder and for revealing your grace to us every day. Help us to embrace our inner servant and remember that what we have to offer is enough. We are enough in your eyes. God is good!



September 10, 2026 – Chelsea Allen

Scripture: Scripture Colossians 4:2 — Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.

Devotion: Paul's instruction is to be committed to prayer and to keep alert—not with fear or worry or anxiety, but to keep

alert with thanksgiving. I find comfort in believing I am exactly where I'm meant to be; actively reminding myself that God has a plan and a purpose for me even when I'm facing a difficulty, uncertainty, or a season of suffering. Would Paul's instruction to keep alert with thanksgiving be as meaningful if he were having the best day ever? Would we be able to be intentional with prayer and thanksgiving if we were imprisoned? A practice of gratitude helps us focus on God's goodness, God's provision, and God's plan and purposes for us. We can show our thankfulness to God not only through prayer, but through the unique gifts and opportunities given to each of us to serve, give, and worship.

Prayer God, help me to develop a practice of gratitude even when my circumstances feel uncertain or difficult. Draw near to me when I feel I have little to be grateful for, and help me to remember that your plans are always to give me hope and a future. Show me opportunities to serve, give, and worship—using the gifts you've blessed me with to fulfill your purpose for me.

September 11, 2026 – Mike Cotter

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-9 – for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God, not the results of works, so that no one may boast.



Devotion: We are all called to give from our hearts, not always our pocketbooks, but with our time, talents, offerings and service. There are many times my heart guides me to help a worthy cause, a needy friend, or a church project.

Always filtering things through my wife, we make decisions together. When we give it is often anonymously, not looking for human gratification because Jesus guides our giving hearts and rewards us with His grace filled love and comfort. Knowing all that Jesus did for us makes it much easier for us to offer small financial or time sacrifices. We have been so blessed and find comfort in His embrace during good times and bad.

Prayer: Jesus thank you for helping us focus on the needs of others. Genuine giving from our hearts is easy, knowing you planted the seeds of generosity for us to share our love.



September 12, 2026 – Jillian Murray

Scripture: Psalm 107:1 --O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Devotion: I strive to be a person who sees goodness in all aspects of life. I grew up hearing the Word every Sunday, my pastors preaching the

importance of giving thanks to God for all things, in all times. I said nightly prayers and told God how grateful I was for all the blessings He had given me. I was taught by my parents that every day on this earth is a gift, and that an “attitude of gratitude” keeps us humble. And I know why these values were impressed upon me - to live in gratitude means that we choose to recognize and appreciate the power and faithfulness of God. Gratitude helps us remain hopeful in every season, good or bad. Gratitude also develops contentment, reducing feelings of envy and dissatisfaction. It creates a positive atmosphere, improving our relationships with others and our overall well-being. Why then, is it so easy to falter and let our daily distractions dull our awareness of God’s presence?

When gratitude is hard to come by, and we lose our focus on God, we risk losing opportunities to witness God’s quiet kindness. Recently, my daughter wanted me to take her and three friends to the pool to celebrate one of the last days of their summer break. Selfishly, my instinct was to decline. I was feeling stretched thin and at the end of my rope. I finally irritably agreed, but my position on that day was the opposite of grateful (anyone who has ever spent time in a car full of preteen girls can probably relate). The minutiae of the vestiges of summer break were gnawing at me, and because of this, I stopped seeing

God and was solely focused on my own discontent. How silly and careless I was to ignore the abundance of blessings surrounding me. I had a healthy, lively daughter with safe and lovely friends to laugh and grow with. I had a husband who, for 15 years, has been my best friend and partner, and is raising said daughter with me. I had a working car with the ability to transport myself and others from place to place. I had the luxury of having a membership to a neighborhood pool, located only a couple of streets away from both my sister and my mother, with whom I am both close. I had a front row seat to watch delightful children splash, jump and play to their hearts' content. I had food and drinks to pack in our cooler. Perhaps most importantly, I had the ability to enjoy the breeze, hear the birds, and feel the sun on my face, God's creation literally ALL around me. Do you see how I could have approached this outing differently? Gratitude could have made all the difference.

Prayer: Lord, help me to always see you. Help me to be aware of your constant, faithful presence. Mold me into your humble and grateful servant. I give you all of my thanks for my health, my life, the love that I am given, and the love that I can share. Thank you, God. Amen.

September 13, 2026 – Rebekah Catalano

Scripture: Luke 6:38. Jesus told his followers, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good portion—packed down, firmly shaken, and overflowing—will fall into your lap."

Devotion: I've been baking a lot lately—banana breads, blueberry muffins, and cookies. As I read this verse in Luke, I picture myself packing down a cup of brown sugar—pressed firmly, leveled exactly. Not an ounce over what the recipe demands. Is that the image of generosity Jesus is portraying? No. He doesn't say, "Give 1 leveled cup, measured exactly and packed firmly within your expectations." Jesus says, "packed down, firmly shaken- and overflowing." Pack the sweet goodness of your gratitude into your gifts to God and the work of God's people-- and *keep piling it on till overflowing*. God's generosity to us cannot be scooped, packed, and leveled. It is overflowing and never-ending. Our generosity should be, too.

Prayer: Dear Good and Gracious God, help us to give abundantly in response to the gifts you have given to us.



September 14, 2026 – Liz Huggins – Bridges

Scripture: Psalm 69:30 “I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving”

Devotion: This verse speaks deeply to me of the nature of our relationship with God. So much of the Bible, in my opinion, is a love letter from a loving Father. It speaks of His deep love, commitment, and movement in our lives.

This verse really makes me think about ways I can love Him back. We are made as relational beings, purposed to love, and be loved. That being said, I believe one of the best ways we can give love back to the Triune God is through song and praise.

Music has a special power to it when it is used to give back to God- to give back the only thing any of us has to offer God-our love. The thing He wants from us!

I have attended many Christian music concerts and worship services and in special moments, when thousands of believers raise their voices together in praise, unified, hearts on fire for God, I truly believe I have seen a preview of Heaven. I believe this verse hints at what eternity perhaps could be: one enormous worship service. How blessed would we be to join the never-ending chorus at the throne: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, God Almighty!"

Prayer: Thank you, God, for blessing us and giving us a voice with which to praise you in song, words, deeds and magnify your name with joy.



September 15, 2026 – David Carryer

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5: 18 "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Devotion: Working with youth is like herding cats.

Getting everyone moving together takes effort, and success is never guaranteed. Navigating my goals, moody teenagers' willingness, and God's will is a delicate balancing act. Yet, amid the "Holy Chaos," the Spirit reminds me these kids could be anywhere, but they chose to be here at church to learn about their faith, have fun, and just be. Recognizing that fills me with deep gratitude, making the chaos feel lighter and the joy far more profound.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the Holy Chaos and every blessing within it. I cannot control the world, but I can control my response. I am overwhelmingly thankful for the opportunity to serve. In your name I pray, Amen.

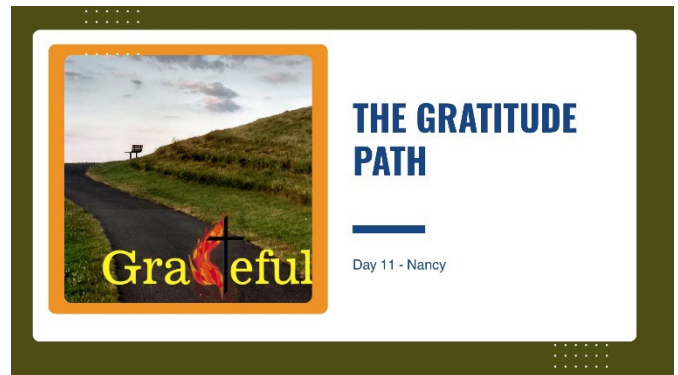
September 16, 2026 - Nancy Tomlinson

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:15 -- Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Devotion: Generosity received births generosity in return. || When I rang bells for the Salvation Army I was always impressed by the generosity of givers. The largest gifts came from those whom had been helped by the salvation Army when they needed assistance. They wanted to help others in return and did so with sincere gratitude. Those who cheerfully gave often shared their stories with me. Their children delighted in putting money in the kettle and listening to the stories; one generation teaching the next.

In 2 Corinthians 9 we are reminded of God's incredible generosity in Jesus Christ. In response, we are invited to be enthusiastically generous ourselves. As we are are generous as a church, what kind of reputation will we build in our community? What stories will be told about us?

Prayer: God, as you in Christ gave to us with grace and generosity, may we follow your example and give enthusiastically with abundance.



September 17, 2026 – Joelle Gotwals

Scripture: Colossians 3:17 -- And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Devotion: Gratitude is more than simply saying “Thank you, Jesus,” or “Thank you, Lord.” True gratitude changes the way we live, the way we love, the way we hold ourselves out to the world. When we recognize how good God has been to us, that recognition translates to our faith in action—and our giving. Colossians 3:17 reminds us that everything we do should be done in Jesus's holy name, and with thanksgiving to God. This includes how we treat our blessings He has brought us, the gifts He has entrusted us with, as followers of Christ. Every blessing is a reminder of His

love for us: our families, our health, our opportunities, our strength, and even our LIFE is a gift from God, and we are commanded to respond accordingly.

When we give out of gratitude, we are not giving because we feel pressured or obligated, or to appear like we are “good Christians.” We give because we have already experienced His goodness. We give because we acknowledge, through word AND deed, that everything we have ultimately comes from Him.

Sometimes we may focus on what we don’t have, and forget to thank God for what we do have. Gratitude shifts our perspective, and calls to look at our resources and say, “Thank you, Lord, for trusting me with what I have.” We give because God first gave to us.

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, we seek to be reminded of what your love has given us. Help us to remember that the gifts we cherish, the opportunities we relish, and the safety and security we rely upon, are all from YOU. Remind us that the greatest gift we have ever received was your son, Jesus Christ, so that we could have forgiveness, salvation, and hope. We pray for true understanding of the magnitude of your gifts to us, so that our generosity becomes a natural response, borne from our gratitude and faithfulness. In your precious and holy name, we pray. Amen.



September 18, 2026 – Julia Rizzo

Scripture: Psalm 28:7 – The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Devotion: It’s easy to get bogged down by all that there is to manage in our lives today. Our lives have become very busy with work, caring for others, social obligations, and constant demands for our attention. It can also be difficult to keep a good attitude as we navigate the ups and downs that life throws at us while doing our best to maintain it all. But luckily we serve a God who gives us exactly what we need. He is our shield from the pain, weariness, and overthinking that can so quickly plague our bodies and minds. And His strength gives us the ability to persist when we forget to use His word to block out the noise around us.

Through it all, God is a steady anchor for us to stabilize ourselves as we watch the storms around us come and go. No matter what we are asked to weather, we can sing our praise to Him because we trust that He is good and walking with us each step of the way.

Prayer: Lord, we are overwhelmed by the weight that the world puts on our backs. Sometimes we become so focused on all that there is to deal with that we lose sight of You. We pray that You would nudge our hearts when we start to fall into the trap of taking on the world on our own. Please remind us that You are patiently waiting for us to lean and rely on You. Through all things, You are faithfully by our side, ready to carry our burdens and the source of goodness in our lives. For that, we come with grateful hearts full of praise.

September 19, 2026 – Susan Bixby

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:8 -- O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.

Devotion: We serve a generous God. You've heard the phrase Beyond your wildest dreams. He knows our

dreams. He hears our prayers. And oftentimes He goes beyond. More than we deserve. And what is our response to that generosity? How do you feel about someone who is kind, loving and generous to you? There is a contemporary worship song called I Surrender All. "All to Jesus, I surrender, All to Him, I freely give."

We should return His generosity with ours. Whether that is with our tithes, our time, or whatever gifts we have to share.

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, make me aware of your gifts that are often more than I ask for. Give me that spirit of generosity that I can freely give of myself in return. In your Holy name I pray. Amen.

