

Trinity Evangelical UMC

Passion Projects

Lent Devotional

March 3, 2019

Special thanks to all of those who contributed to this devotional. It is for the benefit and blessing of others that we share our “passion projects.” May God be glorified in all that we say and do!

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Day 1: Alivia Oney

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

I believe that God has planted in each of us individualized and unique interests, talents, and passions that allow us to serve and fulfill his mission here on Earth. For as long as I can remember, I have been extremely passionate about sports. Not only have they allowed me to develop friendships while having fun and staying healthy, but more importantly they have provided me with a platform to reach others and outwardly represent my love for God to those around me.

Because I have grown up in the church, I have been surrounded by people who love God, and I have come to realize that sometimes actions really do speak louder than words. There are several people who I can think of that, without even mentioning God, very clearly represent characteristics of a strong believer of Christ, and I think that through sports, I have been able to do the same thing for people around me. When I consider what the qualities of a "Good Christian" are, I think of things like humility, selflessness, compassion, and kindness. These are all qualities

that can be developed and conveyed through participating in team sports.

We all have different passions and are placed in situations where we are able to be a light for others and outwardly illustrate what it looks like to have an internal love for Christ. My advice would be to strive to be that light no matter what your passion is.

Lord, thank you for instilling in each and every one of us gifts and passions that allow us to reach those around us. Help us to use the platforms that we have been given, to achieve more than just our Earthly goals, but to serve your mission and fulfill the purpose that you have set for each of us. Amen.

Day 2: Lori Arnold

Hebrews 6:19 "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure."

Ephesians 6:10 "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of
His might."

God has gifted me with the word HOPE as I have prayed: Lord, use me and my life to serve You. I feel that God has called me to be a Shepherd of Hope, and He's using my life experiences to point others to Jesus as I cling to Jesus to hang onto hope. Hope is not an abstract term or just a thought or feeling; it is the spirit of our Living God that keeps us going, something to hold onto, our Anchor in the storm. Actually, Hope is our Anchor every day and breathing moment!

I have several hopeful ministries and passions. Please pray over these as God uses me to continue to share hope, joy and encouragement:

- The Trinity Women's Conference "Seeking Hope & Joy" – 4th annual this spring.
- The H.O.P.E. (Helping Others with Purpose and Encouragement) Support Group for people dealing with chronic illness. This meets at WMH fall/spring sessions.
- My first book Finding Joy on the Mountain Climb: One Day at a Time with God (c2014) that I wrote to share testimony about how God helped me through a very difficult time of dealing with illness, and as part of my healing and to share encouragement with others. I am now working on my second book, Anchored by Hope,

sharing testimony about God's strength and hope getting me through an even more painful time of loss and healing. I enjoy speaking about my books too.

- My piano music and worship leading certainly uplift me with hope, and I love sharing that passion with others. Praise music speaks to my soul and is my favorite form of worship!
- My puppetry gives me so much joy, and especially to see the joy that Ernie brings to children. My love for children combined with my years of early childhood teaching and training teachers inspires me to serve Jesus with my puppet as a children's ministry. Ernie and I have been a teaching team since I was 8 years old! May God be praised through all these hopeful endeavors, and may He receive all the glory. It is always my purpose to point others to Him.

Prayer: Lord, help us to believe that YOU are our Living Hope, our one true source of strength. Help us to lean on You, our Anchor, at all times - especially when the waves crash over us and we can't see or understand what is happening – and to know that You will never let us go. Please help me to be a Shepherd of hope and encouragement to others. Amen.

Day 3: Barb McClain

“Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.”

(1st Timothy 4:12 NLT)

God gives us all passions to do the work that needs to be done for His Kingdom. There are many ways to be the hands and feet of Christ.

One passion of mine is to touch the lives of our teenagers and young adults. Making sure they have heard the gospel and help them to understand it.

I want them to know just how much Jesus loves them! This time of life is so important and very impressionable, a young person makes life altering decisions daily. My passion comes from my own decision to follow Christ as a teenager and knowing full well my life could have been very different in making different decisions. Even if a young person doesn’t completely grasp giving their “whole” life to Christ at first, the seeds are planted and God will start the process of wooing their heart and showing himself in different circumstances to draw them to Him. Drifting from God and “backsliding” can occur; however, God’s grace is always there and He has a way of breaking through just when needed. It is my wish that everyone hears the hope that is found in Christ and sometimes young hearts are more open hearts (although I realize not always). However, that is why I have a passion to reach the younger population. There is no

better use of your time and resources than to invest in young hearts, bringing them into the presence of God and His mighty Kingdom. To God be the glory for how He works in all our lives!!!

Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunities for us to use our passions to further your Kingdom. Open the ears and hearts of young people all over the world to be receptive to hearing the good news of salvation. We pray that lives will be changed for the better and more and more people accept your love and you as their Lord and Savior. Thank you for all the blessings you will be bestowing on your children. We love you Lord, AMEN.

Day 4: Breanna Byrd

Actively Loving Others

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:9-16)

My passion to love Jesus and others!

In loving Him we are commanded to love others without restriction or judgement. We try to create an atmosphere of pure joy and love at Reignite for each person who attends, no matter what burden is carried through the door each week. When we put love into action and pour into the lives of others, it opens our eyes to how God loves his children, and puts sweet joy in our lives. We can show God's love by noticing the unnoticed, loving the unlovely, or even by extending grace to those who test our patience. There is not a single person that Jesus does not love or has not come to save. When we put the needs of others before our own, we become a beautiful example for this world of the love Jesus poured out to us. It is a daily struggle to love others like Jesus

loves us, but such a sweet experience when you see someone experience pure unconditional love in Jesus.

I never want someone to feel alone, unwanted, or unloved because they are different from someone else. We have all been given a God designed purpose with different gifts and talents. Because of Jesus, I am learning to love and appreciate every person.

Sweet father, I pray that I never grow weary of loving others, but always love them like You love me. You have shown me such grace, and You continue to come along side me in each season of life. You are the constant in my life, and You make loving others enjoyable.

Day 5: Carl Mullins

You made them rulers over the works of your hand; you put everything under their feet. (Psalm 8:6)

The passion project I am involved in is called Treasure Hunt. It is a part of Larry and Angie Overholt's ministry in Honduras. With this project they are looking for items that are needed for the nursing high school and the vocational school to fill a shipping container that will be sent by ship. The container will be sent around the end of April or beginning of May 2019. Items that are sought after are tools for automotive repair (such as wrenches, socket sets etc.), tools for carpentry, marching band type instruments (horns, flutes, etc), sewing machines, sports equipment, classroom equipment, nursing clinic equipment, and nursing lab equipment. All the collected items will be taken to WGM in Marion Indiana where the container is located.

We are all called to be God's hands and feet! We all have gifts, skills, and talents that can be used to help out our brothers and sisters. No matter how small we think our abilities are, there are people seeking the very gifts that God has given you.

If you would like more information on the treasure hunt or a more detailed item list go to www.overholthonduras.org/treasure-hunt. I can also be contacted at cmullins001@woh.rr.com about donations.

Father God thank you so very much for all you have given us. Lord, give us the boldness to share our gifts with others. Bless the items that will be donated and the givers. Bless the students that will be learning from the items sent, that they may also bless others with their gifts. We ask all this in the name of Your Son. Amen.

Day 6: Bryce Mast

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

(Titus 2:7-8 NIV)

Growing up, I had excellent examples of lives well lived all around me. God gave me parents, grandparents, pastors, and mentors who showed by example what it meant to pursue God in their work and leisure time.

As I think about what I'm passionate about (God, family, music, and discipleship), I realize that the undergirding principles of character and integrity must be present to give depth to these passions. Leading others by example is the truest form of teaching. You can talk the talk, but if you don't walk the walk, your talk is meaningless.

In our lives, the opportunity for God to mold our character and make us people of integrity begins at sunrise. God desires for us to be careful in our thoughts and speech. He wants to give us His desires, that they may find a home in our hearts, and be lived out with purpose. His love- with skin on it.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your purpose today. May what I do and say set an example of godly living. May my life point others to You.

Day 7: Cathy Gerber

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)

I am a byproduct of an unwanted pregnancy. However, by the grace of God my birth mother chose adoption over abortion and gratefully I was adopted by a loving, Christian family when I was three months old.

I was 'me' while in my birth mother's womb. I didn't "turn into a human" when I traveled the eight inches through the birth canal. The Bible says God knew me before he formed me in the womb. What if I had been aborted? The plans the Lord had for me would have also been destroyed. Anything I've done in this life, anyone who I've helped or encouraged or supported, anyone I've given life to would not be here...their children would not be here. What about all those who were aborted? Abortion kills babies. It ends lives and all God had intended for those lives.

The Bible is clear on God's perspective of the womb. Psalm 139:13 says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." God created us in the womb! He is clear on his perspective of the contents of the womb. Luke 1:41 states, "at the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her." It's a child! Psalm 139:16 says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all my days were written in Your book and ordained for me before one of them

came to be." God had plans for me before I was born! Life inside the womb is sacred!

Related Scriptures:

Galatians 1:15; Psalm 139:15; Isaiah 49:1; Isaiah 49:5;
Matthew 19:14-15

Lord, thank you for the plans and purposes you have for our lives. We eagerly pray for Your kingdom come, and You will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Day 8: Chloe Taylor

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength will be made perfect in weakness.’” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

One thing God has been teaching me, is to be fearless. One fear I have is the fear of what people would say or think about me if I am open about my faith. It is funny how God works. God has been pushing me to be more open about my faith. The people in my life, the scripture I read, and my prayer time with God all point to one central idea: be more open about my relationship with Jesus. Whether it is on social media, in front of my peers, or simply in my everyday speech, I am trying to display Christ’s love and truth.

Sometimes I get scared and want to cower away. Every time I feel fearful, I recite “My strength is made perfect in weakness”. What is amazing about being vulnerable about my faith is that I have found freedom in vulnerability. I feel more of whom God created me to be; I am not holding back. Christ is showing me the fullness of the verse John 8:36, “Therefore if the Son has set you free, you are free indeed”. I am continuing to thank God for His strength being shown through my weakness.

Father, I pray that You would give me the boldness and confidence in my identity in You to be open about my relationship with You. Thank you for Your grace when I become fearful. I love You, Father.

Day 9: Chris O'Donnell

It is true. God uses our weakness to accomplish His plan so that we cannot take credit for His work (2 Corinthians 12:9). One of my weaknesses is avoiding social situations as I am awkward and do or say the wrong things.

My 'Burning Bush' moment came while driving past the jail. The voice was simple; "I want you to minister to those in jail". That was it, nothing more. Like Moses, I thought "Really Lord, You want me?" When God speaks, the choice is to obey or disobey. I chose obedience.

What wonderful things God has accomplished through the Seneca County Jail Chaplaincy. The chaplaincy is a group of odd people from different Christian faith backgrounds united only in the passion of delivering the love of Christ to those who have stumbled in society. God uses each chaplain to His greater purpose.

Those who are incarcerated come from many backgrounds. Some have never heard about the healing grace of Jesus. Others started out with a Christian background but either fell away or were deeply hurt by the Church in some way. Then there are those who have a passion for the word of God, but struggle to shake the temptations of this life with addictions or anger or mental challenges.

The jail is a spectrum of society from those who are possessed by demons to even clergy who have stumbled. What is the unifying factor? They all need to feel the love of God.

Several inmates have asked, "Why do you do this or do you get paid?" The answers are: "For the love of God" and "Yes, more than you can imagine."

" When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:39-40)

Lord, let hearts be opened so Your voice is heard and let Your grace be felt so that the pal of sin is lifted. In Your power and majesty, drive Satan away from those who have come to love You and strengthen the feet which walk out of jail to follow the path You have directed. This I ask in the name of Jesus, amen.

Day 10: Tina Patrick

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

I have always had a passion for horses and hope that one day that I could open a stable where kids with criminal records could come and serve their time on the farm taking care of horses, cattle etc. Learning to care for animals daily, learning to ride and find joy in responsibility. A place where they could put their cares and concerns behind them. Learn about Jesus and explore the country life.

A lot of kids have no focus they just need to get away from their setting, and “escape” so to speak.

I would love to put two small weekend cabins on our property and set up a program with our county for a weekend retreat for hurting and troubled kids.

Father, if it's your will in whatever capacity, make me an instrument of help for those who are hurting. May I glorify you and show others your salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

Day 11: Dave Schilling

“You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.”
(James 2:22, 23)

Being a farm boy, growing up near Upper Sandusky before and during the Second World War, my parents were faithful in teaching us gospel truths. As a result, I came to know and accept Christ as a young high school student, but needed some help and encouragement along the way. After high school, college, and army, my father passed away in 1954, the home farm beckoned, and nearby Treva, a fourth-grade teacher, was convinced to share our lives together.

Together we came to appreciate the chance to serve our great and mighty God while raising a family on the farm. Along with corn, pigs, cows and w hater, the boys became the most important crop. We were committed to doing our best to see them grow up to know our Lord as well. The Lord has led us to serve in many supportive ways, mission projects, missionary support, bible school, Sunday school, scripture distribution, personal witness, and teaching. There is no greater joy than to see our youth come to know and accept our Lord Jesus Christ and commit to serve Him eternally, not just our youth but also folks everywhere.

“Only one life to live and soon will be past
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

O Lord, open our eyes, our ears and our minds to the ways we may help build your kingdom of believers both here and wherever we can. Help us to see you will in every situation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 12: Deanna Oney

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

You are Special. You are Loved. You are made new. God has a good, good plan for you.

A passion of mine is not only for everyone to know these truths, but to believe them. As a special education teacher at the middle school level, I witness daily so many kids desiring to “fit in” and “belong.” At times, this desire and temptation, really begins to weigh so heavily on them that they start trying to be like others. They start saying different phrases, acting in overall different ways. Then comes the negative self-talk. There is a disconnect in them seeing how fearfully and wonderfully made they are. If they could just catch a glimpse of how much God loves them and values them, how they are such a masterpiece, made anew in Christ; I believe they would live differently, they would no longer compromise the true, authentic art of who they were created to be.

There are many challenging days at school, and this is just a glimpse of it. I am very thankful that I have an opportunity to take my passion for everyone to know these truths, combine it with my passion for praying God’s word, and trust that in His timing, He will reveal these life changing truths to each one. Now, these truths are surely not just for middle schoolers. With this, I challenge you to cling to the truth that

God does not make mistakes, our God has made us each a masterpiece. A special, loved, made anew masterpiece.

Dear Lord, thank you for making us in Your image and for blessing us with gifts and talents. Thank you that our true identity comes from who You say we are. We ask that You would reveal your truths and plans to those in our lives, so that each person would walk in the destiny you have for them. May all of the glory be to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 13: Debb Hines

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Have you ever taken a spiritual gifts survey? I have taken several at different stages of my life and each time I wondered if the results would be different. But each time it has turned out the same. In the past several years I have felt that God has encouraged me to focus on my second strongest gift...service.

I am so energized when I get the opportunity to help serve someone. Things like helping serve funeral dinners, serving on the media team, baking pies for Thanksgiving, praying with someone, feeding my family when we are together, being a greeter. All of these activities and more not only help someone else with their responsibility but brings great joy to me. I call that a double blessing!

Each of us has been given a talent and God is expecting us to use that talent for His glory. Something as simple as opening a door or sending a card or praying with someone doesn't take much time, effort or money. But it can have an impact for them to see you sharing God's love.

As we walk through this day today, Lord, help us to see the people who need your touch. Thank you for choosing us to be your hands and your feet in all that we do and say. Amen.

Day 14: Dwayne Sayre

Matt. 22:37 Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 40 The entire law and all of the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

I have a fourfold passion: Giving blood that can be useful in saving lives and restoring health; living a life as a Christ follower, being a doer of His will and witnessing to others; sharing God's Word both verbally or through sharing the Bible; and supporting youth programs that have a goal of developing adults who believe in and follow Jesus.

John 15:13 "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." Giving of a unit (pint) of blood, on the average, helps in some way prolong the life of three persons. Jesus shed His blood and died for our sin that I might have the choice of being a member of His Heavenly Family. The least that I can do is offer my blood to keep a person alive until that person has the opportunity to choose and serve Jesus. That person can then have his/her name written in the Book of Life as a member of Jesus's Heavenly Family.

Prayer: Our Lord and Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of salvation. Guide me, to be as bold in spiritual relationships with others as you choose. Direct me to encourage those who are following their worldly way, to see a

need, to abandon them and develop a serious relationship with You. I pray that they come to love You with all their heart, mind and soul. Also love those around them, as they love themselves. I pray in Jesus name. Amen!

Day 15: Emily Baird

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*" (1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV)

In today's day and age, beauty seems to be on every surface that reaches our eyes. We are constantly bombarded with the next "look," how we can wax our eyebrows so they're on "fleek" (Lord, forgive me), if we look tall or short enough in the family photo, and oh man, if we don't - it better not be posted to Facebook!

We see it every day. We see it through our friends, or people passing by in public. I see it on the girl posing with her Cheesecake for dinner for a social media worthy photo (guilty), and I see it through my seventh-grade students who desperately wish they could be a few inches taller. It's seen through the fact that I set a hair appointment to add hair extensions to my already too thick hair, and it's seen through my neighbor wearing a hat to cover his unfavorable hairline. The point here is the desire to look "beautiful" or "handsome" takes the forefront of our minds more than we as Christians would like to admit. As much as I fall into it and witness it take a stronger presence in our culture today than what is comfortable or Godly, I have realized the importance of becoming passionate about what the word of God has to say about outward appearance.

Contrary to the importance appearance seems to have in society, God isn't concerned with any of that. God isn't looking at your height, hairline, or hair extensions. God doesn't have the least concern for who is wearing the best outfit at church on Sunday, if you lost or gained five pounds, or how you looked in the family Christmas picture last December. Think about the physical feature that holds the most value or concern in yourself or someone close to you - this means nothing to God. God is after your heart.

So, what can we do in a culture that is so focused on the outside appearance? Let's challenge ourselves when we find that we are conforming to the cultural view of beauty to cling to the promises and claims God holds over this. God doesn't see as man sees. Even after my hair extensions appointment, I will be reminding myself: this doesn't matter. This doesn't change what God sees in me. Enjoy the extra hair, girl, but enjoy having a heart for the Lord ten times more. God sees, values, and finds beauty within your heart - a heart that was created and molded *by Him* to beat longingly *for Him* (Colossians 1:16).

Dear Lord, thank you for being a steadfast God who focuses and values steadfast things. Help us mold our hearts to yours. Encourage us to look at and find beauty in the hearts of ourselves and others. Change our standard of beauty. Lead us to realize that being truly beautiful comes from the conditions of our hearts, and a well-conditioned, beautiful heart can only come *by you* and beat *for you*.

Day 16: Emily Wolfe

I heard an audio program of James Dobson's, for teenagers once as I was driving my car, and it made such an impression on me that I've remembered it often, as I do my work in the church. I actually parked my car that day and stopped to listen to the program!

The Bible verses the program centered on was James 1:2-8:

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If you lack wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like the wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do."

The characters in the program that day in my car continuously used, as a mantra, "consider it pure joy" over and over as they faced their many obstacles. I thought about that many times from that time on, and suddenly

I was saying to myself the same thing, "Consider it pure joy..." when I faced different kinds of trials, whether obstacles of pressing time constraints, changes in work schedules, sudden overloads of work, pressures with personalities of co-

workers or friends, or sudden fears or threats of health issues in myself or my family members.

“Consider it pure joy” has become a real comfort to me since that day many years ago, and I know God DOES give it generously to all who seek and ask!

Father in heaven, thank You for the joy that comes from knowing You. May we seek to know You in ever-increasing ways and share You with others, that their joy may be complete as well! Amen.

Day 17: Esther Walker
FOR REAL: LOVE ONE ANOTHER

It never ceases to amaze me that when we grow up physically and spiritually, we still find it hard to love one another as Jesus loves in our weekly church experience.

“Dear Friends, let us love one another because love comes from God, whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God for God is love. And God showed his love for us by sending his own Son into the world, so that we might have love through him. This is what love is; it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means for which our sins are forgiven. Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another”. (I John 4:7-11)

Why is it so hard for us in the church family to reach out our hand to others; no matter how the other person has lived or is living or grew up in your county. I know from experience what it is like not to be accepted in my church! It takes years before so called “people of God reach out and practice forgiveness, compassion and love to each other”. We just might miss the joy!!!

“And now I give you a new commandment! Love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another then everyone will know you are my disciples”. (John 13:34-35)

Prayer: Our Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us and continue to show us ways to glorify you with our attitudes and actions. Amen.

Day 18: Jack & Elena Helmer

“... As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples...” (John 13:34-35)

We have been involved with foreign graduate students and foreign work colleagues from all over the world for many years from my wife’s work at universities in Ohio and in Austria, where we recently lived for three years.

They were often either at our house here in Upper or our one room apartment in Vienna. Many meals at home, restaurants, airport runs, errands, train trips, weekends, resumes, job applications, practice phone interviews across continents, reviewing papers, teaching Excel, pre-marital counseling, and many other ways to develop relationship and support them.

We are still in communication and active with many of them. We find it amazing how after developing relationship, they often want to talk about faith and Christianity, ask questions, become seekers, or just need to be encouraged.

PS: Do we **use relationship** to **go/do/have/be** OR do we **go/do/have/be** to **do relationship**? Scripture says the latter.

Good Lord, teach us to love as you do, opening our doors, showing godly hospitality, and truly loving people. May we seek to love in word and deed. Amen.

Day 19: Jenni Bacon Miller

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Romans 10:14)

Kids hurt. Families are fractured. Schools struggle to keep students not just learning, but safe – from each other, from even themselves. Believers wonder: what can we do to help kids in these dark times?

Help shine the Gospel light spreading across Ohio and our nation: Released Time Bible Education. Of Ohio's 600+ school districts, nearly 80% have adopted board policies allowing children to attend Bible classes held offsite, free of charge to the public schools and available to any student (K-12) whose parent will sign them up.

My passion is School Ministries Ohio. Our mission is to help communities bring word of God's love and love of God's Word to public school students (see www.schoolministriesohio.org). We educate, equip and encourage Christian leaders to start, maintain and grow Released Time Bible programs around our state and beyond. *And it is working.*

Nearly 10,000 students statewide already attend Ohio's local Released Time Bible classes – from rural, suburban and urban districts. Columbus City Schools just started a pilot program this past fall!

But there are more than a million more Ohio students who need churches and communities to come together to offer this incredible educational option – when kids' character development is more at risk than ever before. By God's grace, and with enough and prayer and support, we can make an

eternal difference. We can bring the love of Jesus to kids who don't know Him and might never hear.

Heavenly Father, waken your Church. Fill believers with a holy fire to reach kids – and their families – and their communities – for Christ through Released Time Bible Education. Your fields are ripe unto harvest, so Lord, send out workers to pray and give to grow your Kingdom – so that children can hear, believe in, and call on the only one who can save. Thank you, Lord, for hearing and loving us. May your perfect will be done, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 20: Dwayne Sayre

John 14:15 Jesus said, "If you love me obey, my commandments." Keeping His commands is my goal, to show my love for Jesus in my relationships throughout each day. Hopefully, even though I many times fail, my hope is that with Jesus's help, I will fail less and less, and succeed more and more, and that my goal will be noticeable to those with whom I work and associate. Also, that it will lead them into a relationship of knowing Jesus and making Him known to others also.

Mark 16:15 And then He told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." As a member of the Gideons International, Wyandot Camp, I have the opportunity to witness and also purchase, share and place Bibles locally in the hands of youth and adults, also in schools, colleges, hotels, motels, hospitals, care centers, and offices. Not just locally, but throughout over 200 countries. Additionally, sharing the life changing results of this witnessing and Scripture placement with local Churches encourages them to become a part this world outreach effort. Usually they offer funds to purchase more Scriptures, making it a team effort to share God's Word throughout the World. There are some amazing Testimonies of lives committed to following Jesus resulting from taking the Good News to everyone.

Proverbs 22:6 Direct your children on the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it. I remember at a very young age in life, my parents, (especially my mother) and grandparents were teaching me the Bible stories. Jonah,

David and Goliath, Adam and Eve, Abraham, Jesus and the Disciples. We also had Bible stories read to us in early elementary school, Christmas and Easter programs (Usually at a Church building), and a Faith centered program before graduation. This part of educating our youth in schools has been mostly abandoned. However, I strongly encouraged and supported youth training in the Church small groups, in schools like Wyandot Cares and School Ministries. This is the age that almost all of life's virtues are established.

Our Lord and Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of salvation. Guide me, to be as bold in spiritual relationships with others as you choose. Direct me to encourage those who are following their worldly way, to see a need, to abandon them and develop a serious relationship with You. I pray that they come to love You with all their heart, mind and soul. Also love those around them, as they love themselves. I pray in Jesus name. Amen!

Day 21: Jim Stauffer

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church (or assembly), and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The “church” is my passion project for serving Christ. The vision of God’s people assembled in perfect love and holiness is an unrelenting motivation for me. The reality of seeing that vision requires accepting the reality of our sinful condition – mine, yours, and everyone who’s ever lived, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Accepting our imperfections means no earthly “church” will meet that perfection, no system will fix it, no legislation can achieve it, no preacher create it, no amount of human effort overcome our shortcoming.

The assembling together of those who accept Christ is also the gathering of those admitting to their own imperfections/sinful condition. The assembly of believers is a gathering of those who have experienced the grace of God – and therefore should be far more willing to extend it.

Making our assembly a place we are faithful to God’s call is not automatic. Christ did not tell Peter that we would build this assembly – Jesus said “I will build my church”. My passion is to use my gifts to serve that goal and trust that someday we see that beautiful vision of our victorious and perfect assembly together for all eternity.

See our best (and imperfect) efforts for Christ at our church website: www.mytrinity.us.

O Lord, You build the Church! Help all those who are part of it to be so filled with Holy Spirit that we may bear your fruit and keep in step with Your plans. Forgive us where we fall short – help us to live in Your perfect love and truth. In Jesus name, Amen.

Day 22: Julie Adelsperger

“And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching.” – Titus 2: 7

Youth ministry is something that I have become very passionate about over the last year, especially after becoming aware of the abundance of youth throughout Trinity. The church that I attended as a middle/high school student did not have a youth ministry and I think that this really hindered my faith and spiritual growth at a young age.

Becoming involved with the Reignite Youth Ministry at Trinity has given me the opportunity to invest time in the youth and guide them in seeing who they truly are: Children of God. At this age, it can be easy to get lost and confused about their identities and purpose in life. Pointing them to God and who He created them to be is one of the first steps in helping them build a relationship with Christ. Building relationships with these students helps to foster trust and allows them to be more vulnerable. Once those relationships are established, communication becomes more relaxed, and students can express thoughts and fears comfortably, allowing encouragement and guidance to help grow their faith and love for God.

This passion has enabled me to bond with these students and plant seeds for spiritual growth in their lives in hopes of building up God’s kingdom. It is such a rewarding

ministry, and I am privileged to have the opportunity to invest in the lives of our youth!

For more information on the Reignite Youth Ministry please visit <http://mytrinity.us/ministries/reignite-youth> or call Trinity UMC at 419-294-1535.

Prayer: Lord, we pray for open hearts in seeking out our youth and showing them your love and mercy through our words and actions. We lift each one of our students up to you and pray that you would help them to see their true identities through you. Help us to serve with humble hearts while working in us so that you can work through us in serving this ministry. Amen.

Day 23: Kalia Mast

My passion is to live life in the Spirit in order to ultimately bring others to know and love Jesus Christ, and to transform their lives for His sake!

Galatians 5:22-23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Colossians 3:12-14, "Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience..."

Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

We were given an INCREDIBLE gift in Jesus. For us He lived, died, rose three days later, bridged our separation from God, and gave us His Spirit. He now sits next to His Father interceding on our behalf!

When I think of the many things I'm passionate about: the church, reaching the lost, bringing students to know Jesus, seeing marriages & families THRIVE to name a few... I know all these things are impacted by my conviction of how we should live as Christians. We are called to live life in the Spirit, which means we can possess the FRUIT of the Spirit. This helps us live like Jesus.

Although we may not obtain perfection on this side of heaven, we do bear His fruit! Just like Jesus, we can walk in a

room bearing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, etc! Instead of getting caught up in our daily schedules, worrying about home repairs, or trying to climb a social ladder, we have an opportunity to make lasting impact for ETERNITY.

Our two greatest commandments are to love God & love people. So, we must start by spending time with both! Just like when one spends a lot of time with a friend or spouse and becomes more like them, we can do the same with God! As we spend more time with Him and get to know His heart for us, then we receive the fruit in His name- ultimately bringing others to know Him and then through the power Jesus, changing lives!

Father God, I praise you and thank you for who you are. Help me to be more like your Son today. I pray that I would embody the fruit of your Spirit. As I am filled with your love, joy, and peace, may you work in and through me so that others would be blessed and ultimately come to know You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 24: Kathy O'Donnell
PASSIONATE CHRISTIANS

"Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

My passion is to give seeking people a Bible. I work with my husband Chris in taking Christian outreach into the Seneca County jail. I have the privilege of being the partner who passes out a copy of the Bible to the ones who ask for a personal copy.

By jail rules all Bibles must be paperback, so we hand out no-frills copies in either English or Spanish. Chris and I buy them by the case, and when they run out, we buy more. We have been doing this since 2010, so by my count we have placed 300 + Bibles into eager hands. I assist all the men and women to discover what's in this Bible by inserting a one-sheet Bible guide into each one. I prepared the page to help the reader find basics- like childhood Old Testament stories, Gospel events of Jesus' life, meaningful psalms, and New Testament teachings. I give away the guide page to anyone who requests it, translated into the language they need-- English or Spanish.

I believe that presenting even a simple Bible to a person has an impact within the jail because men and women alike report to us that they are forming small groups that read the Bible daily while they are held there. I am blessed to experience their reactions when they receive a Bible. I see faces of excitement, hope, relief, and even disbelief that this

gift is free with no strings attached. I have seen God at work, developing leaders who encourage the faith of others inside the locked cells. I am convinced that God is at work there and it is evidence that Jesus is alive!

It's amazing to be part of this work and it's something to be passionate about.

Lord, thank you for the gift of Your Word. May it continue to be a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths- even as we share it with others. Amen.

Day 25: Kevin Lok

"Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." (Psalm 95:12)

It is important to thank God for what we have first and realize He has given us what we need. We should use our gifts, and not just ask and expect more to be given.

We are children of God. Have we looked from God's viewpoint as our parent?

Parents give new life to their children; they raise their children. Some children make their parents proud, while some children can't even take care themselves. Even worse some become professional criminals to harm other humans.

When we say a prayer to God, we often ask for more than our share, even though God promises to give each of us all we need to run our lives. Some people do very well and give to the others. They make God proud. On the other side of the spectrum, some grown-ups waste what is given, and can't even take care of themselves.

Next time when we pray, why not thank God for what He has given us, rather than always asking more? We must ask for wisdom and strength to help ourselves and others. Material things will only offer a short time of happiness. Gratefulness gives us true joy from within.

"Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" (Revelations: 7:12)

Day 26: Larry Hoover

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8)

My first mission trip was to Honduras, in 1985. A co-worker had gone with a group from his church to Honduras in January of that year. When he came home, he came into my office and laid a passport application in front of me. He told me I really should go to the El Sembrador Farm School in Honduras, a mission of the World Gospel Mission organization. I am a civil engineer, and he told me he thought they could use my help at El Sembrador.

I got my passport, contacted Terry Hawk of WGM, paid for his airfare, and he and I spent a week later that summer surveying the main area of the Farm School. Going on that first mission trip changed my perspective on missions and missionaries. The Lord seems to touch most people when they go on their first overseas mission trip. It affected my wife and our daughters the same way, as well as the many people from Trinity who have been on similar trips. I have been to Honduras at least six times since that first trip, including several with our family, and have been blessed every time. We have also been blessed to see and hear about the effect that mission trips have had on others, as well.

The Lord has blessed us in our engineering company, and He has allowed us to be able to give a significant portion of our profits to missions for more than 40 years. Some of that

mission giving has been in the form of supporting groups or individuals going on mission trips. A fund has been established here at Trinity in memory of my late wife, with the purpose of providing financial support for people going on their first mission trip, and for defraying some of the mission trip expenses. This is our way of helping to send, whether we go personally, or not.

Lord, thank you for the many blessings you provide to us. Thank you for showing us how we can pass on some of that blessing to others by going on mission trips, or by sending others. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Day 27: Lené Taylor

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” Isaiah 1:17

Our family began supporting International Justice Mission (IJM) six years ago. As I researched the issues of modern-day slavery and sex trafficking, I could not help but think of my own children. What if one of my sweet children was suffering like those I had read about? I would go to any length to bring them back to safety. Are my children any more important in God’s eyes than those currently being abused and exploited?

During my visit to IJM’s field office in Guatemala, we visited an aftercare center that serves 120 girls under the age of 18 who had been sexually abused or trafficked. As I sat across from a 13-year-old (coincidentally the same age as one of my own daughters) nursing her 7-month-old son, I had to hold back tears; she had undoubtedly endured horrific experiences. Yet she was not living as a hopeless victim. She was going to school and caring for her baby, and God was restoring her with the help of the incredible staff and the financial and prayer support of people around the world, people like you and me.

The Bible is clear about how we are to respond to those in need. As God’s hands and feet, we must play a role in rescuing and defending those who are oppressed.

Dear God, please show us how you want us to respond to those in need and to defend the oppressed. Give us the strength and courage to obey your commands. Amen.

“You may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know.” -William Wilberforce

Please visit www.ijm.org for more information about how to get involved.

Day 28: Chaplain Matthew Conley

redroadmedicinepath@gmail.com

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Are you a person that wonders how they can become a greater positive influence upon their community? If so, I would like to share how I started my journey on becoming a better positive influence within my community and people I come into contact with each day. I did that by taking a training course to become a "chaplain" through an organization known as "I Am Community Chaplains of America".

This training course has taught me how I can share my love of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to my community and those I come into contact with every day, no matter what the person is going through, "by building a caring relationship with the hope of gaining permission to share the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ in a non-threatening manner". It gave me training in areas such as: Suicide, Critical Incidents, Substance Abuse, and much more.

If this is something that interests you, and you would like to minister in such a manner, please email me at the above

address. And in the subject book please respond with "I Am Community Chaplain"?

Dear Jesus, we long to, "build caring relationships in the hope of gaining permission to share the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ in a non-threatening manner."

We also long to reach out to people with Your love, no matter what they are going through, but we don't because we don't know how to help in certain situations. Jesus thank you, for this will be the way I can finally reach out to those who are hurting. I admit that I never reached out before, in fear that I would find someone that is going through a situation that I didn't know how to help them through, but now I can, for You trained me how to help in many situations that people go through.

Thank You Jesus, AMEN.

Day 29: Mike McKee

Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

There is a plaque hanging on the wall of the Wyandot County Salvation Army office stating this promise from God's word. Clients who come to the office seeking financial assistance are referred to this verse. While they are thinking about their financial need, they are assured that God is referring to all their needs in life! Actually, their greatest need in life is for salvation that Jesus made available through His death, burial, and resurrection. Explaining the salvation message is why this charitable organization is called the "Salvation Army."

They offer help to people who are going through a difficult time in their life. They are told the salvation message because Jesus is the answer to life's difficult situations. Whether it's health problems, family problems, or addictions, Jesus can lead us in the right direction and provide the abundant life that God promises us in His word.

The Salvation Army has adult rehabilitation centers for individuals who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. There are people who live in Wyandot County who have been through this six-month in-house program. They give credit to Jesus for saving their life!

The Salvation Army has summer camp for young people ages 7-13. The three-hundred-acre facility has a lake for fishing and boating. They have horseback riding, a zip line,

ball fields for all sports, and a huge swimming pool where campers can swim every day. This year's camp is July 17-22 and only costs \$20. It's a Christian camp and campers are taught about the salvation message. While ringing a bell during our holiday season's kettle campaign, I hear adults tell me about their Salvation Army camping experiences when they were a child.

You know about the Angel tree program at Christmas and the Salvation Army is thankful that Trinity Evangelical hosts this event and that many members provide gifts for Wyandot County children.

It has been a privilege to serve as Wyandot County director for the Salvation Army for the last six years! The most exciting part has been to experience the life changing event of the clients who have come to know Jesus.

Our Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank you that you would love us so much that you would send you son, Jesus, to die for us. We pray that you can use us to tell others about salvation through Him. Guide and direct us to do your will and to show your love to our neighbors. Amen.

Day 30: Pamela Johnson

Director of Special Needs Ministry

“I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and I know this very well.”
(Psalm 139:14)

I truly have a passion for helping families and children with special needs. I believe God made everyone exactly the way He wanted them and that He has a purpose for their life. God doesn't make mistakes! Individuals with special needs are just as important to God and to me as all other children.

God created us all uniquely different, but we are all part of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12 says, “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.” God did not make anyone who is good at everything, nor did he make anyone who is bad at everything. He gave each of us unique talents that He intends for us to share with others, for His glory.

If we don't let those with special needs be included and give them the ability to share their gifts and talents, not only are the individuals with special needs missing out, but we as a congregation are missing out on what God intended for them to share with us. My goal is for individuals with special needs and their families to feel welcomed and accepted by our church and our program.

For more information on our program, in order to enroll your child, or volunteer for Sunday school or Buddy Break please contact me at 937-578-8417 or by email at pam@mytrinity.us

Lord, please grant peace to parents and children with special needs, love and compassion to volunteers, and direction for leaders in order to grow your ministry and fulfill your purpose. Amen.

Day 31: Pete Schindler

My passion project is serving others by honoring our country and the families of those who have served. As a member of the Upper Sandusky Veterans Color Guard, it is my hope that others will see Christ through our presence in their time of grief. By honoring their loved ones with our presence, it is my prayer that they can see God's love. We have served our country and we continue to serve with military graveside services, presentations of our country's colors and standing with faith beside everyone.

"There are only two defining forces that have ever offered to die for you, Jesus Christ and the American soldier. One died for your soul. The other died for your freedom."

1 Peter 5:2: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not pursuing gain, but eager to serve.

Day 32: Raine Schindler

I am passionate about youth ministry. I have been a small group leader with our current youth program, "Reignite," ever since its inception. This means a commitment of Wednesday nights during the school year and a group trip in the summer. The bigger commitment is love and prayers for these young women that look to me for spiritual guidance.

I was not a Christ follower until my twenties. If we could reach and encourage our young people before the world has a hold on them, they could bring their generation to fuller knowledge of our Lord the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They could begin a movement of faith that outshines anything we have seen.

"Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Philippians 2:1-4)

Day 33: Sharon Calvin

“Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:11-12)

If you know me at all, you know my passion is/was teaching. Actually, I think my passion is to make a difference in a child’s life.

When I was in college I thought about joining the Peace Corps. Why? I have no idea, because it was hard for me to go 30 miles away from home for college! But God had a different plan of course! He made my classroom my mission field. It took many years for me to realize this and actually teach like it.

What changed me and made me realize it? Running in to a friend and smiling and saying, “Hi.” Later she sent me a note that my smile was exactly what she needed that day. I also saw an article that said maybe the smile or kind word a child gets at school is the only one they will receive that day or week. From then on when I was at my door duty I made a special effort to smile and say good morning to each child that passed by. What a blessing that became for ME!!

A few years later, I was talking to a former student and he said that one time I drew a smiley face on a test that he did well on and it made his day! He still had the paper and looked at it when he was down. Later that year he went to prison. I got his address and wrote to him about once a month and always included a smiley face.

There's a lot more examples I could share about the little things that make a difference and we possibly never know. God put it on my heart to share these little things even when I don't realize the person needs it.

So, I'm not sure if my passion is teaching or just trying to be kind but it sure does the heart good when a former student says it made a difference to them!

God, please watch over the children at school and let the teachers be the difference in their lives! Let the teachers share those small gestures that could mean the world to a child. Make the classroom their mission field! In Jesus' precious name, amen.

Day 34: Stacy Mullins

For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

When I think about who my neighbor is, I have concluded it is anyone I come in contact with. My family, friends, my actual neighbors, co-workers, students, those who I meet at Open Door, the people at the grocery store, people I may not have met in person, even the very special people of Honduras. In reality, everyone.

I have seen what a smile given to someone that doesn't think anyone cared about them can do to change the way they feel. We are all the same, we want to know that we matter to someone. There are a whole lot of people that do not know the gift of the loving Father. That is where we come in to show everyone they matter and are important. Then we are in a position to lead them to Jesus.

Last February I was blessed to be able to travel to Choluteca, Honduras with the mission team. My heart was overflowing with love for those that live there. Everyone was so welcoming, thankful, gracious, and loving. I learned just what it means to love your neighbor. I was shown so much love from my new Honduran family it was almost overwhelming.

I would urge you to show your "neighbor" God's love whenever you have the chance. Be the example God has called us to be. Want to intentionally show God's love? You can help at Open Door www.opendoorohio.org. To see where

you can be plugged into Choluteca, check out www.wgm.org, then search "Larry and Angie Overholt."

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your son to teach us how to love each other. We pray for all our neighbors. Please put it on our heart to show Your love to everyone we come in contact with- those who visit Open Door, and the people spreading your words and love in Honduras. We pray these things in your Son Jesus' name, amen.

Day 35: Steve Washburn

Leadership through Others

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”
(James 4:10)

My passion for leadership and having a positive effect through others comes from my father. From my earliest years he instilled in me that you always help others because it's the right thing to do. My father was always helping a friend, serving on local boards and even volunteering at local support agencies.

Back in 1997 I had the opportunity to be involved in a program for business leaders called Leadership Marion. It was a program designed to educate attendees on the history of Marion but more importantly, the needs of the community. After completing the program, I was asked to be part of the United Way of Marion Campaign Drive - Business Division which ultimately led to being asked to be part of the Board of Trustees for United Way of Marion County.

Around 2010 United Way of Marion County was asked to take in Wyandot County and create a new presence in the community. The UW director at the time, knowing I lived in Wyandot County, asked if I would assemble a team of interested community leaders to form an Advisory Board to oversee the operations of UW in Wyandot County.

I was blessed with a great group of people who have helped grow the presence of United Way and to support the

needs of the local community. I was humbled by the overwhelming support of the board and other community leaders that allowed us to bring Todd Gongwer, the author of *Lead for God's Sake*, to Upper Sandusky to speak to our local business leaders and our youth on leading with a purpose under God's grace. Although United Way historically supports local agencies for those with immediate needs we continue to look for opportunities to proactively develop and support our community.

<https://unitedwaywyandot.org>

Lord, thank you for those that give of their time to help others in their time of need and open our eyes to opportunities that exist to guide and develop leaders of all ages whose words and deeds will glorify you. Amen.

Day 36: Chris O'Donnell

My heart has always been with those going through traumatic experiences. This was honed on the Samaritan's Purse mission trips that I took part in. On those trips, I met some wonderful 'regular' people not in the SP orange shirts, but in blue shirts. They were chaplains with the Billy Graham Evangelical Association. These people ministered to homeowners devastated by some disaster and brought the word of God to them in the midst of their strife.

The chaplains also minister to the workers who can become disheartened with the emotional and physical stresses of cleaning out a person's life memories. The workers meet people that they learn to love and their hearts are broken for those people. This is a shock to someone living casually in comfort and plenty.

Look at yourself for a minute and imagine losing the very things you hold dear. Where would you go if you lost your house? How would you cope with a serious injury or illness? What would you feel if you lost a loved one? Then imagine all these things happening at once to someone with no relationship with Jesus Christ!

What kind of God would allow this to happen? Where is God? Why did He leave me? There must be no God if this is how the world works. Christians who belong to a church have these questions, but non-believers raise these questions as well. BGEA Chaplains walk beside those who are hurting and lost .. and when the opportunity happens, to tell of a God full of grace and compassion.

"In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me,

come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me." (Psalm 31:1-2)

Lord, let Your presence be felt by those in the storms of this life. Bring strength and peace through Your servants called to love and minister to those whose life has been traumatized. Strengthen the church to minister in all areas of disaster, both physical and spiritual. This I ask in the name of Jesus, amen.

Day 37: Tina Patrick

Standing strong in the Lord

Proverbs 2:1-11, 20, 21.

Verses 3-5 tells us if we seek wisdom and understanding as a hidden treasure, we will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of Him who gives it to us.

In this search through His Word we find truth and acquire faith in dealing with life's trials. Learning to be victorious no matter what is handed us. Standing when we didn't think we could. Be able to help others because God has shown us how to prevail. Know He will never leave us (Hebrew 13:5).

The world gives us no hope of victory. It offers only despair, failure, no assurance that we will come through hard times. I know no matter what comes my way that he will provide the strength needed for me to be victorious.

The goal:

- * To bring praise and glory to Him.
- * For others to see his work in me.
- * Grow continually in wisdom and understanding!

Let God give you the strength for each day no matter what comes into your life. **Psalm 18: 2** "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

He is a mighty God and we are His Children. Don't be defeated. Learn who He is and who we are and STAND!

Day 38: Toni May

RE-Ignite 9th grade girls

“So, you see, faith by itself isn’t enough; unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.” (James 2:17)

We are all called to serve. Serving Christ is both a command and a privilege. God’s plan is to use us, to see His kingdom come to earth, to be His hands and feet. God gave us different talents and passions in order to further His kingdom. My passion is working with the Youth at RE-Ignite. My group has been such a blessing and a support system in my walk of faith.

Our faith is what saves us, so if our faith is genuine, that faith will lead to obedience to Him. God is calling us to be active and to participate in good deeds. “Acting on the word of God.” That may be serving in the Nursery, or on a Commission team, or with the Youth on Wednesday nights. Maybe that means going to another country, or just next door!

Our youth can be an example to all of us on how they serve others and their willingness to share their faith. 1Timothy 4:12 says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.”

Lord, I pray for all our youth here at RE-Ignite and around our community and throughout the world. Lord I pray for their understanding of your gospel and that they come to you in prayer, seeking your guidance, trusting in you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day 39: Wendy Searfoss

“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.” (Proverbs 18:15 NIV)

I have a passion for learning! Throughout my life I have searched out opportunities to grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

My spiritual growth began at a young age. My grandmother was a devoted Christian woman who would read me the stories of the bible and took me to church regularly. I loved listening to her share her wisdom about life and believe my life-long pursuit of God and knowledge began during this time.

As a young Christian mother and wife, a lot of my time was spent seeking out information to help raise my children and grow my marriage. I read the books and listened to other moms and wives who were going through the same trials I was experiencing. I often found myself gravitating toward sources of information that focused on using faith and the Bible as a guide (thanks Grandma).

Throughout this time in my life, I grew in my confidence as a mother, wife, woman, and Christian. I found the more time I spent reading God’s word, the more I wanted to know and understand what true faith looked like. I decided I needed to learn more and pursue God with more intensity. I joined small groups and discussed Christianity with people who were full of wisdom and passion. I studied God’s word on my own by reading great books and listening to podcasts of people

who are big thinkers. I looked for opportunities to talk with individuals and small groups of people about God and our faith and how to live out His commands in today's world.

My advice to you is to seek out opportunities to learn and grow. Read the books (the librarian in me must always mention books:), listen to the podcasts, watch the videos, take the classes, join the small group, attend the conferences or retreats. Open yourself to opportunities to learn and grow in your faith and knowledge.

Father, you are so good. Thank you for designing each of us with unique passions and gifts to be used to make this world a better place. Help us to have the courage to step out of our comfort zone and grow in our faith and knowledge. We love you! Amen.

Day 40: Bryce Mast

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:16-19)

What a prayer! This was Paul’s prayer found in His letter to the church of Ephesus, sometime around AD 60. Like Paul, we hope that through this devotional you have been strengthened through the Holy Spirit, and that through the words of our brothers and sisters in ministry, the passion of Christ dwells in your heart.

Our passions (and the projects they lead to) are testimonies to the love that Christ has for us. His passion project was a cross. His love for us is great. And His victory is ours!

Jesus, we thank you for the sacrifice you made, that we would no longer be lost in our sin, empty of purpose, and our lives devoid of meaning. We pray to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, that our lives would be a passion project for you. In Your holy name we pray, amen.