



AUDREY JACKSON

Carlos Rivera prays with patients in the COVID-19 ward of Hospital Regional San Francisco in Juticalpa, Honduras.

## Compassion at capacity

**AS THE DELTA VARIANT** fills a Central American hospital, medical mission Predisan bolsters patients with prayer, vaccines and 'sincere confidence that God is with them.'

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

### JUTICALPA, Honduras

Carlos Rivera didn't seem to understand the question: "How does it feel to walk into a room full of COVID-19 patients?"

"I feel OK," he said, looking slightly puzzled. "I pray with them."

Perhaps it was a translation error — or the layers of personal protective equipment he was sweating under on this humid Honduran afternoon. So a *Christian Chronicle* reporter asked it a different way: "Why are you *willingly* going in there? A lot of people wouldn't." A bilingual physician, Javier Franco,

translated the question into Spanish.

Rivera's answer was the same: "They need prayers. Each patient in there is asking for prayers."

That's all the motivation Rivera needed to strap on a hooded gown, hairnet, rubber gloves, goggles, an N95 mask and a face shield outside the Hospital Regional San Francisco's COVID-19 ward.

He's one of a small group of chaplains who take turns visiting patients in this Central American town — beset by poverty, natural disasters and now the virus — through Predisan, a mission with roots in Churches of Christ.

Stepping across the threshold into what once was the hospital's

emergency room, Rivera and a small team of physicians and journalists were suddenly in a landscape of labored breathing. On beds lined with beeping monitors lay the unit's most critical patients, their faces obscured under masks and tubes.

Rivera made his rounds, taking prayer requests from those able to speak. His goggles fogged with condensation as he began to petition God on their behalf. A few patients responded, raising their arms, weakly, toward heaven.

"They asked for prayers for their families back home," said Franco, translating the patients' requests, "for security and for

See **COMPASSION**, Page 12

## Afghan mission becomes a race to save lives

**CHRISTIAN COUPLE** who built schools and clinics pray and petition for those left behind under Taliban rule.

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

For 13 years, retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. John Bradley and his wife, Jan, built schools and hospitals to improve the lives of Afghans.

Then on Aug. 15, Kabul fell, the Taliban resumed power after 20 years, and the Bradleys, co-founders of the Lamia Afghan Foundation, began trying to get friends and partners out of the country — to save the lives of Afghans.

By Aug. 31, the self-imposed deadline for U.S. troop withdrawal, the Bradleys had filed 500 applications with the State Department and Department of Defense. They were assured those efforts would result in their people getting a call to come to the airport gate — and a flight to freedom.

But by mid-September, only two children — relatives of an Afghan-American friend in Virginia — and about a dozen family members of an Afghan-American physician in Houston had made it out thanks, at least in part, to the Bradleys' efforts.

"We're worried about our friends, about our volunteers, our partners, about women judges and journalists, and media people, interpreters," Jan Bradley told *The Christian Chronicle*. "We're concerned about all those people who are still in the country in hiding."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOHN BRADLEY

**John and Jan Bradley at an internally displaced persons camp in Kabul where they started a school.**

See **AFGHANISTAN**, Page 20



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## Emotions high as church floods — for second time

NUNNELLY, Tenn.

A noisy, industrial-strength fan blew in the back as Pinewood Church of Christ members stepped into their makeshift worship facility on a recent Sunday.

Wooden planks — newly installed with help from 15 volunteers from the Brushy Church of Christ in nearby Centerville — framed the rural congregation's picnic pavilion.

### Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

New, maroon “Songs of the Church” hymnals, placed in each white folding chair, replaced old songbooks lost in the historic flooding that hit Middle Tennessee on Aug. 21.

“Can everybody hear me OK?” elder Phillip Bates said as he opened the morning assembly. “We want to welcome you here. It’s kind of different circumstances.”

Randy Deitmen said he didn’t want to be emotional, but he just couldn’t help it.

The 68-year-old Christian has worshiped with the Pinewood church, which averages Sunday attendance of 60 to 70, since 1974.

More than a decade ago, the congregation — about 60 miles southwest of Nashville — had to rebuild after devastating floods swamped the Volunteer State on May 1-2, 2010.

That same storm system

See **PINEWOOD**, Page 4



DAVID JOHNSON

First responders pose with a child at Carolina Bible Camp’s bluegrass festival, which paid tribute to the nearly 3,000 lives lost in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

## Festival commemorates victims, heroes of 9/11

**AT 20TH ANNIVERSARY,** *Christians in North Carolina, New York and across U.S. take time to reflect on the lives lost.*

BY **BOBBY ROSS JR.** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

**MOCKSVILLE, N.C.**

Carolina Bible Camp’s all-day bluegrass festival Sept. 11 was a time for pickin’, fellowship and remembrance.

Hundreds of bluegrass fans converged on the rustic camp, about 60 miles north of Charlotte, to hear artists such as Scythian, Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers and His & Hers.

But before the banjos, mandolins and guitars took over the wooden stage — normally the camp dining hall’s front porch — the crowd paused to reflect on the nearly 3,000 lives lost in the 2001 terrorist attacks.

“This is a very important day in our nation’s history — the 20th anniversary of 9/11,” Dennis Conner, minister for the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, told attendees

seated in folding chairs on the lawn. “We’re just blessed and thankful to God that we continue to enjoy our freedoms and the way of life that we have here.”

On a sunny day with high temperatures in the 70s, red, white and blue ribbons adorned hay bales and wooden planks as a group called Wilkes Seniors on Stage sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Talitha Vickers, news anchor for WXII-TV in Winston-Salem, led the



Conner

## Ida strikes: Congregations gear up to help

**IN NEW ORLEANS,** *church members praise God that the damage wasn’t worse.*

BY **ERIK TRYGGESTAD** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has spared us once again.”

Angela Marsalis and fellow Christians across New Orleans sent up praise on social media after Hurricane Ida, one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the U.S., blew ashore Aug. 29.



Marsalis

The Category 4 storm downed power lines and tore roofs from buildings, including the meeting places of at least two Churches of Christ, and caused damage across the city. But Ida, which made landfall exactly 16 years after Hurricane Katrina, did not inflict the level of destruction wrought by that storm in 2005.

Marsalis and her husband, Charles, worship with the Hollygrove Church of Christ in New Orleans. The couple took shelter at an area hotel that weekend before returning to Hollygrove Monday to inspect the damage.

“Neighbors are safe. A few roof shingles have blown off the roof,” Angela Marsalis posted to Facebook, “trees snapped and lots of cleaning up to do.”

About 55 miles northeast of Hollygrove, the hurricane’s winds ripped apart the roof of the Hollywood Road Church of Christ in Houma, La. As church members assessed damage along the storm’s path, relief ministries associated with Churches of Christ worked to help.

**FOR UPDATES** on the Hurricane Ida relief effort, see [christianchronicle.org/hurricaneida](http://christianchronicle.org/hurricaneida).

See **9/11**, Page 24



# PINEWOOD: Rural Tennessee church building floods — again

## FROM PAGE 3

produced a tornado that damaged Deitmen's house.

Eleven years later, the recent sudden deluge ravaged the Hickman County congregation's meeting place once again.

"Sometimes, the older you get, the more it affects you," Deitmen said of how hard the building's loss — for the second time — hit him.

## 'FELL IN LOVE WITH THIS CHURCH'

But Phillip James, 41, said Deitmen wasn't the only one experiencing such feelings.

James, a plumber, became a member after helping with the post-2010 construction work.

"We fell in love with this church," he said. "My wife and daughters were baptized here."

Both Deitmen and James stressed that the building was a minor loss compared to the 20 lives lost in nearby Humphreys County — including 7-month-old twins torn from their father's arms by the raging torrent.

"You hate to even feel bad about your building," James said.

"That's just awful," Deitmen said of the twins. "That is worse than this. ... We are tough. We'll come back."



DREW GRIMES

**Floodwaters swamp the Pinewood Church of Christ in Nunnally, Tenn.**



DON MOONEY

**Olivia Chilton hands out sunflowers as the Pinewood Church of Christ prepares to worship in its picnic pavilion after the Tennessee flood.**

## NO INSURANCE TO REBUILD

This time, the church — which meets next door to a horse barn — has no insurance to cover the damages, member Drew Grimes said. Coverage was impossible to find after the last flood, he said.

The day of the flooding, Grimes said, he drove a Polaris Ranger all-terrain vehicle to check on a friend and helped rescue about a dozen people from a home near the church.

The red roof of The Ranch, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center across the two-lane blacktop from the church, washed nearly two football fields away.

"You are looking at what's left of our medical building," said Christi Winters, a longtime church member and housekeeper for The Ranch, pointing out the debris.

Grimes recalled seeing truck drivers with boats and life jackets, all intent on helping neighbors that Saturday.

"I've seen the best of people in the last week," he said.

But every time his family drives by the church, his 4-year-old daughter, Sadie, mentions the flooding.

Grimes said she keeps asking, "When can I go back to Bible class?"

## CHURCH PLANS TO RELOCATE

For now, church leaders intend to install heating and cooling units as

well as a bathroom in the reconfigured picnic pavilion, said elder Bates, who is Grimes' father-in-law.

On this Sunday, a portable restroom was available. Bug spray and hand sanitizer sat on a table beside portable communion supplies, which the church — like many — has used since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

When the coronavirus became a concern, the church previously met outdoors in the pavilion on several fall Sundays with cooler temperatures.

But on this Sunday, two coolers were filled with bottled water and soft drinks, out of concern about possible warmer weather.

As for the long-term plan, the elders will look for a new property on higher ground and relocate the church, Bates said.



DON MOONEY

**A member picks up a portable communion packet at the Pinewood Church of Christ in Nunnally, Tenn.**

"This is two times," he said of the flooded building, explaining the thinking. "We've had a few close calls."

Grimes pointed to an empty field on a hill overlooking the church and said he'd love to see the church built there. "We'd like to be where we can still see our original home," he said. "But as long as we're still somewhere in the community, I believe everybody will be happy as can be."

**FOR INFORMATION** on how to help the church, see [christianchronicle.org/pinewood](http://christianchronicle.org/pinewood).

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I was in Tennessee to cover the flooding on the same Sunday that Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana.

I originally headed to the Southeast U.S. to attend that Saturday's funeral for Lads to Leaders founder Jack Zorn at the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Ala. Zorn died Aug. 12 after an extended illness, as

we noted in the September issue. He was 86.

That Monday afternoon, as I was boarding a flight in Atlanta to return home to Oklahoma City, The Associated Press sent a "flash" — its designation for "a breaking story of transcendent importance" — about the chaotic end of America's 20 years of war in Afghanistan.

The headlines just keep coming.

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your support as we work hard to cover as much of that news as possible.

**BOBBY ROSS JR.** is editor-in-chief of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [bobby@christianchronicle.org](mailto:bobby@christianchronicle.org). Follow him on Twitter at [@bobbyross](https://twitter.com/bobbyross).



# Christians help after major flood

**IN HARD-HIT TENNESSEE,** *donations pour in as a church provides shelter to displaced residents.*

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

## WAVERLY, Tenn.

**T**he Waverly Church of Christ's pews were packed on a recent Sunday — but not just with people.

Clothing and stuffed animals covered several rows, just one sign of the 200-member congregation's effort to help victims after historic flooding.

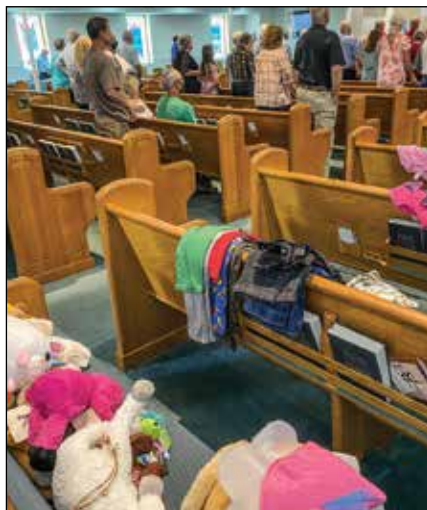
Nearby, grocery items and mattresses filled the church's activity center, where about two dozen displaced residents had slept since a record rainfall — 17 inches in one day — caused rivers and creeks to overflow Aug. 21.

"I've not just seen the congregation respond. I've seen the community respond," said preaching minister Jeff Keele, who, with his wife, Becky, stayed up all night that Saturday working at the shelter.

In this town of 4,300, about 65 miles west of Nashville, the flooding damaged or destroyed hundreds of homes. The elementary and junior high schools were flattened.

Worst of all, 19 people died — including 7-month-old twins torn from their father's arms by the raging torrent. (A 20th victim lived in Humphreys County, where Waverly is the county seat, but not in town limits.)

"It's amazing how all the different groups and organizations have come into town," church elder Ronnie Moore said. "There's an outpouring of love everywhere."



**Stuffed animals and clothing cover some of the Waverly church's pews.**



DON MOONEY

**Volunteers with the Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team work in Waverly, Tenn., after historic flooding damaged hundreds of homes.**

"I think of all the children that were lost — the little twins — and I can't wrap my mind around that," said Cathy Moore, Ronnie's wife, who was helping cook meals for survivors.

One of those who died was a member of the Waverly Church of Christ: 16-year-old Nathaniel Whitsett.

Several members' homes flooded, and a handful of members lost all their possessions, church leaders said.

Whitsett, who was autistic, was "described as a Bible student who identified strongly with Moses, who was said to have a speech impediment," relatives told *The Tennessean*.

"He was always dreaming big and

talking about plans for big things. He was a very, very neat kid," Kyle Mashburn, the church's youth and associate minister, told the paper.

## 'I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE'

Thomas Erwin, 53, was one of the displaced residents staying at the church. He said he awoke Aug. 21 to "a little water" on his apartment floor.

"Five minutes later, it was all the way up to my chin," Erwin said. "I got to the highest ground I could and called 911."



**Erwin**

Then he and his dog — a pit bull named Dundee — worked to rescue children and adults from the floodwater, he said.

Erwin said he is disabled after a double bypass heart surgery. He had spent the previous eight days at the church.

"They've treated me fantastic," he said. "You couldn't ask for a better shelter than these people have."

He welcomed the food, the clothing — and the prayers.

"If God didn't have a plan for me, I wouldn't be here right now," he said.

One of the people Erwin helped rescue was Annette Dombrowski, 52, who said an avalanche of water rushed into her duplex.

The water rose up to her nose as her 32-year-old son was washed away, she said. Her son eventually climbed onto a roof and sent help for her, she said.

"It was scary," Dombrowski said. "I thought I was going to die."

Like Erwin, she voiced appreciation for the church.

"They ask almost constantly if I need anything," she said. "I say, 'I'm good.'"

## 'LITTLE DID WE KNOW'

Like the Waverly church, another Humphreys County congregation — the McEwen Church of Christ, 11 miles away — was serving as a disaster relief hub.

"The Heart of a Servant" was McEwen minister Hoby Grace's planned sermon title on this Sunday, coinciding with the congregation's installation of new deacons.

"Little did we know. God's providence. God's timing," Grace said, referring to the emergency food boxes and piles of clothing seen throughout the church building.

"We probably won't be having Bible class here for a while," he said of the fellowship hall, crowded with disaster relief items.

Almost every classroom was turned into a supply room, except for the newly painted and decorated room where Amy Tester teaches first- and second-graders. Tester and her husband, Dennis, lost their home

See **WAVERLY**, Page 6



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BOBBY ROSS JR.

Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort boxes fill a classroom at the McEwen Church of Christ, where minister Hoby Grace and his wife, Bonniegene, serve.

## WAVERLY: 'It's amazing to see people give'

### FROM PAGE 5

in the flooding, and Grace didn't want to disrupt her classroom, too.

"Free Meals," said a sign outside the building, where Mike Baumgartner, president and CEO of Disaster Assistance CoC, parked his RV — his mobile headquarters.

The minister's wife, Bonniegene Grace, helped organize the relief effort and insisted on keeping it open on Sunday, in case someone in need showed up.

"I don't know a word to describe it," Bonniegene Grace said of the deluge of donations. "It's amazing to see people give, even if they're just dropping off a bag of clothes."

As for the flooding victims, she said, "People come in. They don't know what to do. They've lost everything. Some people come in with the clothes they've had on since last Saturday."

Hoby Grace said the disaster relief effort has provided a reminder that church is not about "coming to a building three times a week."

"It's about allowing Jesus to be seen," Grace said.

### 'WHAT DO WE NEED? JESUS'

At the Waverly church, Mashburn offered a similar message.

"What do the people of our community need? Jesus," he said in his Sunday sermon. "What do we need? Jesus."

After the service, Mashburn said he was proud of the congregation's response — handing out food and supplies, organizing crews to clean up damaged homes, welcoming state mental health teams and inviting residents to sign up for FEMA assistance at the church building.

"There's more work to be done, so we're trying to keep everyone uplifted and encouraged," he told *The Christian Chronicle*. "The adrenaline has kind of worn off at this point."

While Mashburn preached in the main assembly, Keele took the opportunity to present a biblical message to the shelter residents.

Keele told the *Chronicle* about praying with one woman who has had nightmares about the flooding.

"She needs the prayers to help her through the night," he said, describing prayers as Waverly's biggest need — even more important than financial assistance.

The lessons the flooding response taught Keele?

"In all of this, what I've seen is ... a disaster doesn't keep office hours," the preacher said. "And the other thing is, I have seen people reach out to other people regardless of who they are or where they came from because they recognize another human soul who just needs to be cared for."



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# Church volunteers hard to come by

## CONGREGATIONS STRUGGLE *to restart programs after months of hibernation.*

BY ALLISON BROWN EAST | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

### ROUND ROCK, Texas

**A**t the Round Rock Church of Christ, longtime member Kay Whitehead was eager to return to serving in the children's ministry.

This summer, Whitehead jumped back into coordinating the toddler class. She is a kindergarten teacher in Round Rock, north of Austin, and has participated in her church's children's ministry for 33 years.

"It's been harder to find all the people we need, but for me, there was no question," she said. "I told our ministers that I'm there. I'm ready when you're ready."

The Round Rock church is like many Churches of Christ across the nation that have been gearing up for a return to normal, resuming ministries that were paused for months on end when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Some congregations have seen decreased participation as they have urged members to return to volunteer roles, forcing church leaders to rethink ministries across the board. From children's ministries to community engagement, ministry teams are wondering if members will reengage at previous levels.

According to a Barna report, 84 percent of parents are concerned about the pandemic's long-term impact on their children. Parents of young children especially, often isolated from other families and their church family, have grappled with many complex decisions.

As an educator, Whitehead said she knows the value of the socialization church environments can provide for

kids growing up and the detriment of taking away their Bible classes.

"It's important for kids to be taught about Jesus and the word of God," Whitehead said. "Hopefully, our kids are being taught that in their homes, but it's so important that they see other people in their life who love God, too."

Robin Marrs, Round Rock children's minister, has ramped up recruiting efforts for volunteers and hopes more, like Whitehead, will see the value of serving children.

So far, Marrs has seen decreased participation and commitment for a church that typically has seen active engagement. The church, which has just under 400 adult members, previously had 100 volunteers across its children's ministry.

"One hundred adult volunteers is a huge percentage of our church, much higher than other churches our size," Marrs said. "And even with that many, it's still usually not enough."

By the end of July, half that many — 48, to be exact — had committed to the new school year. But amid concerns over the delta variant, another handful of those volunteers withdrew their commitments.

In years past, Marrs set up a table in the foyer for people to sign up for positions. This year, she opted for personal conversations, phone calls, emails, announcements from the front and posts on social media, blanketing any connection she had to members with her request for volunteers.

"As I feared, we've had so few people commit that we are meeting with the elders to try and figure out how we can still offer as much for our families with fewer people," Marrs said. "And it will probably require a change in our worship structure."

She has diagnosed a few reasons

people aren't returning to their old positions. "There are older members who have served for years, and this was their first break," Marrs said. "Anyone looking for an out, COVID gave them an exit. And we've had people form habits of either not coming in person or now acclimating to the 'get in, get out' mentality of not volunteering on a Sunday."

Marrs also noted that a tremendous amount of apathy seems to have settled in, and some members have cited a fear of working with kids again given the risks of the coronavirus, particularly the delta variant.

In all, this has posed a problem for the ministers on staff and the elders as they have sought potential solutions to bridge the widening gap between wanting to return to normal and not having enough workers to do everything that was done before.

Marrs said she feels like the leadership and the families at church are at a crossroads and need to stop and reevaluate what needs to be done and what can be done.

"People really don't want to commit to anything," Marrs said. "It's going to take time, and I mean years, a few more annual life cycles, for people to reacclimate."

Before March 2020, Round Rock had a first and second worship service with Bible class in between, along with children's worship environments and a nursery during both services. But the church suspended all in-person gatherings from mid-March to mid-June last year, closing for around 12 weeks total.

In the months that followed, the church had stripped-down Sunday offerings that have gradually expanded over the past year. Now, the

church has resumed two services, both mask-optional. Children's environments, minus the nursery, are only offered in the second service. Adult Bible classes have yet to return.

But even for a church that maintained a steady stream of in-person gatherings, Round Rock has faced the difficult task of

rebuilding its new normal, which has caused rippling effects across the congregation.

"When we can't offer a full kids' environment, it's obvious, and the demographics in our services shift," Marrs said. "First service becomes noticeably more older members, and families come to second service when there's somewhere for their children to go. So now we are asking the leadership, 'Are we willing to change to ease the burden?'"



PHOTO PROVIDED

**Robin Marrs serves as children's minister for the Round Rock Church of Christ in Texas.**

### THE BROADER PICTURE

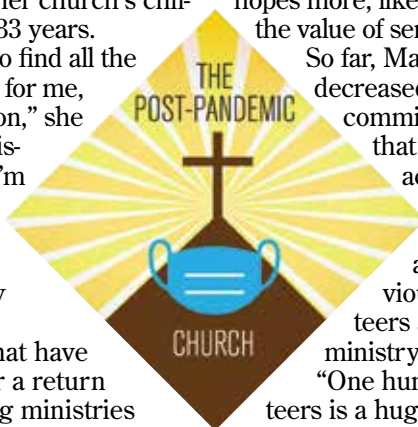
The problem facing the Round Rock Church of Christ is not an isolated one.

It encapsulates bigger questions of involvement churches face after a tumultuous year where children's ministry and other volunteer hubs often suffered.

Travis Irwin spent 12 years as an involvement minister for the Athens Church of Christ in Tennessee. Since retiring at the end of 2020,

he has been consulting with Churches of Christ on issues related to involvement and volunteering and has seen several dynamics at play.

One challenge in seeking volunteers that Irwin has observed: the abrupt end to so many ministries last year. Many churches cleared their



### Sixth in a series

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**Whitehead**



schedules of everything but a worship service — offered only online, in many cases — for an extended time. And as they have weathered the virus surges, they have found it increasingly difficult to work back toward all that was offered before.

Some churches seem to be hibernating, Irwin said, likening the lack of volunteers returning to groundhogs hiding out the winter in their holes. Others have ramped up community-focused efforts and managed to keep members connected in creative ways. He said small groups and active elders checking on members are key for maintaining involvement.

“When it comes to volunteers, you can’t just put something in the bulletin anymore and expect people to come flocking to volunteer for you,” Irwin said. “People haven’t had to volunteer in over a year, and they’ve got into another groove.”

Despite an overall desire to return to normal, Irwin urged churches to take time to reevaluate the future of every ministry to see if they were functioning, effective and fulfilling their mission statements.

## REMEMBERING CHURCH DNA

Matt DeLano, Round Rock discipleship minister, has worked alongside Marrs to connect with members and draw them back into pre-pandemic levels of volunteering. DeLano voiced hope that the fall will mean greater participation in the life of the church.

“We have already built a culture at our church where serving our community is something that we do in our DNA,” DeLano said. “We have to understand that in order to be a Jesus follower, we have to be active in the life of a community.”

Although they can’t go back in time, Marrs and DeLano said they wish the conversations about reimagining the future of volunteering at Round Rock had begun much earlier.

Both agreed: The fallout of the pandemic has given the church space to reflect and re-imagine the future.

“Everyone has been asking these questions of what is important after this last year,” Marrs said. “The church is not exempt. But I want to ask, ‘Is the old normal what we want?’ We have the opportunity to reevaluate everything. And I’m all for thinking, let’s start from scratch; let’s do it differently, and let’s do it better.”



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# A mission of menus: Meals promote unity

**A GOAL TO WELCOME** *brothers and sisters in Christ and to witness to 'a Christianity that is divided.'*

BY CHLOÉ FRANKLIN | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

## ANDERSON, S.C.

**A**fter the Sunday morning service at the Upstate Church of Christ, everyone pours into the fellowship hall to share a meal.

The menu is a mix of Ukrainian-style foods such as *vvarenyky* and *holubtsi* — boiled and stuffed dumplings and stuffed cabbage — and American dishes like fried chicken, green beans and mac and cheese.

The hall is filled to capacity — 82 souls — with people at every table talking, laughing and fellowshiping together.

This is the scene after a recent joint assembly between the Upstate church and a Slavic evangelical congregation — the Church of Anderson — that shares its facility.

“It is an excellent example of what Christian unity looks like in actual practice,” Andrew Hicks, Upstate minister since Easter of 2020, said of the partnership.

The front doors of the Upstate church, 30 miles south of Greenville, open into the fellowship hall.

The room is filled with several rows of long white tables, and before the joint worship, coffee and snacks are served. Many of the Upstate members and special guests greet each other with smiles and hugs.

In the auditorium, four sections with rows of red-cushioned chairs fill the room. Two projectors hang from the ceiling above the stage with a baptistery behind it. By the time worship begins, almost every chair is full.

The service opens with prayer, singing and announcements followed by the Lord’s Supper. Afterward, the congregants take three minutes to meet and greet each other while those ages 10 and under exit for a special children’s program.

Once everyone sits down, the believers sing, and the preacher starts his lesson.



Hicks



CHLOÉ FRANKLIN

**Members of the Upstate Church of Christ and the Church of Anderson in South Carolina worship together before gathering for a joint fellowship meal.**

A month before, the congregations held their first joint worship service, and the ministers from both churches taught together. But on this recent Sunday — their second time gathering together — the Church of Anderson’s Yuri Sushchik, who ministers and also runs a small trucking company, preaches alone.

Sushchik, who immigrated to the U.S. at age 2 as his family fled communism, teaches about recognizing God’s blessings and showing proper gratitude. He also stresses the importance of getting to know Christ, referencing 2 Corinthians 4 in its entirety.

“When you get to know him ... you start to realize that you want that heart of God,” Sushchik says.

Usually, the Church of Anderson meets at 2 p.m. Sunday, and the service integrates both languages. But the congregation is trying to fully transition to English.

Sushchik ends his message with a prayer. He speaks in English, while several Church of Anderson members whisper their requests to God aloud in Russian.

Before coming to America, the Church of Anderson members felt displaced. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Christianity was not accepted in the Soviet Union.

Todd Collins, an Upstate member, said the Ukrainians immigrated to the U.S. for religious freedom.

Several of the Church of Anderson members recently moved to

Anderson from other states, and some have been there for longer. Sushchik said that the congregation has a purpose and vision.

“We have a vision/purpose of our existence as a body to build a bridge of transition, aiming to take people out of religiosity and bring them into a personal relationship with Christ,” he said.

Before the partnership, the Church of Anderson held worship services in several houses. The journey to find a church facility to rent involved lots of door knocking



Sushchik

and many prayers, Sushchik said.

The Ukrainian Christians prayed for God to open doors, he said. They were praying, “God, open the doors that are from you, and close the ones that are not.”

On a Saturday this spring, a couple who are in charge of fellowship for the Upstate church were preparing the building for that Sunday’s service. They forgot to lock the door, and two men entered and asked about the church’s worship assembly.

The next day, the two men — Sushchik and another Church of Anderson member — and their families attended the Upstate church’s service. Afterward, the men approached the elders and inquired about renting the facility.

At the time, Hicks, the Upstate minister, was out of town. A church elder called him and explained what happened. Upstate church leaders took time to talk, think and meet with the leadership from the Church of Anderson.

As the elders met with the Church of Anderson, they realized that the congregations’ beliefs — Christ crucified, baptism as necessary for salvation and only using the Bible — largely lined up.

Finally, Upstate leaders brought the idea to their congregation’s attention. Upstate member Katie Burleson was excited by the opportunity for the building to be used by other Christians — and for the fellowship.

“I’ve really respected our elders in being open to this group of Christians who just needed a physical home,” Burleson said.

Ultimately, the Upstate church decided to go ahead with the partnership. “We are a congregation that has to be an example to each other,” elder Jeff Cutler said, “and we have to be an example to our Ukrainian brothers and sisters and to our community.”

Thus far, the monthly joint service has opened the minds of more traditional Upstate members, Hicks said. And the fellowship, he said, has shown the members that what unites the two congregations is more important than any cultural differences.



# Relief for a shaken Haiti

**A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE** *claims lives and destroys thousands of homes in the Caribbean nation. Ministries send aid.*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

**D**espite an approaching tropical storm, Marie François slept outside.

She was concerned that her house would collapse in the aftershocks of a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that shook her homeland, Haiti, claiming more than 2,200 lives and toppling more than 60,000 homes, according to government figures.

The Aug. 14 earthquake was two times stronger than the 7.0 quake that devastated Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, 11 years ago. The latest quake struck along the same fault line, 60 miles west of the 2010 quake, on Haiti's southern Tiburon Peninsula.

François, who lives in Les Cayes on the southern coast of the peninsula, is a former volunteer for Hope for Haiti's Children, a Cincinnati-based ministry associated with Churches of Christ that operates orphanages and Christian schools in Haiti. Just days after the quake, the Caribbean nation endured Tropical Storm Grace, which pelted the quake-stricken area with rain and hampered rescue efforts.

After the storm passed, Hope for Haiti's Children received reports that at least eight buildings that serve as meeting places for churches and schools had collapsed or sustained irreparable



A quake survivor receives a "survival bag" from Hope for Haiti's Children.

structural damage, said Ken Bever, the ministry's president.

Nonprofits have responded. Hope for Haiti's Children sent a team of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, construction engineers and workers to the Rousseau area in the quake zone to distribute "survival bags" filled with bottled water, rice, beans, cooking oil, flashlights, tarps and rope.

Haitian police escorted a flatbed truck filled with relief supplies from Healing Hands International through gang-controlled areas to reach earthquake victims, workers with the Nashville, Tenn.-based ministry said. Team members set up solar panels to power a staging area for ongoing relief efforts.

"They will construct temporary shelters using supplies that can later be reused to build permanent homes for the residents there,"

workers with Healing Hands said.

The ministry also provided transportation and supplies for a group of 20 Haitian doctors stationed in the hardest-hit region.

Other ministries associated with Churches of Christ, including LiveBeyond, One Kingdom and Christian Relief Fund, are providing for earthquake victims, as are congregations including the Flint Church of Christ in Decatur, Ala., and the West Broward Church of Christ in Plantation, Fla.

Jean Claubert Belton, minister for a Church of Christ in Ganthier, Haiti, traveled to the affected areas soon after the quake to assess needs there.



Belton

*Chronicle.* "I truly believe that it's not about us but it's up to God. He knows our heart. He has power to do everything. ... He knows our needs much better than we do."

**FIND LINKS** to contribute to relief efforts at [christianchronicle.org/haitiquake2021](http://christianchronicle.org/haitiquake2021).

## INDIA

**KOLKATA** — Agape Asia provided emergency aid to people in India's West Bengal state impacted by a recent cyclone and the COVID-19 pandemic.

These efforts include feeding fishermen — both literally and figuratively.

The ministry associated with the Churches of Christ worked with local partners to supply workers, the majority of them fishermen, with food packages for adults and children. Many are unemployed due to pandemic restrictions that closed markets.

"I have heard that Christians are kind people, and today I witnessed it," one fisherman said. "Your God is good. Thank you so much for caring for my family."

## PHILIPPINES

**CEBU** — Following the pandemic restrictions of 2020, Cebu Bible College celebrated a larger-than-usual class of 12 new ministers. Despite ongoing restrictions, many of the graduates find new ways to evangelize and strengthen churches, said director Mark VanDyke.

"This pandemic has taught our students and alumni the need to be flexible and persevere in ministry," VanDyke said, "and their passion to be godly young servants and to preach the Gospel clearly shines through wherever they are serving."



VanDyke

## SOUTH AFRICA

**JOHANNESBURG** — William Jackson, a member of the San Jose Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Fla., spoke virtually at the One Africa Forum: Global Youth Virtual Conference hosted in South Africa.

"Africa cannot meet its future potential without its young people," said Jackson, a longtime educator who conducts workshops on STEM, a discipline focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and STEAM, which also incorporates the arts. He urged participants, who watched from locales across Africa, to use the power and influence of their voices as they form professional networks in person and online. He also spoke about the potential benefits and dangers of social media.



Jackson



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HOPE FOR HAITI'S CHILDREN

**A Haitian family sleeps outside on a night following the 7.2-magnitude earthquake.**





AUDREY JACKSON

A mass of tubes obscures the face of a COVID-19 patient in Juticalpa. "They are inside alone, they are dying alone, or they are in recovery alone," said Dr. Javier Franco of Predisan, which provides regular visits by chaplains to the ward.



AUDREY JACKSON

Santos Ramón, a chaplain for Predisan, says a prayer for expectant mothers at a birthing center in the mountain village of Culmí. Regardless when or if they take the COVID-19 jab, "The best vaccine is to wear your mask," he told them.

## COMPASSION: For 35 years and one pandemic, Predisan serves Honduras

FROM PAGE 1

sincere confidence that God is with them here in this hospital."

### DELTA, BORDER CRISIS, HURRICANES

Hope is in short supply here. So are vaccines.

"If our healthcare system had been frail before, it is worse now," said Dr. Amanda Madrid, chief executive officer of Predisan, to a surgical team from the U.S. — the first to serve with the ministry in more than a year.

Honduras, like most of the world, is riding a wave of COVID-19's highly infectious delta variant. At press time, the nation of 9.7 million people had reported nearly 345,000 infections and 9,050 deaths since the pandemic began. Many here believe the actual figures are higher. About 4 million doses of vaccine had been administered, according to Reuters' COVID-19 Tracker, enough for about 20 percent of the population.

Lockdowns have shuttered businesses and schools. Mission teams have vanished, and nonprofits can't employ the translators and drivers who serve them. Some, without income and fearing rising gang

violence, have attempted the treacherous trek north through Mexico, contributing to a crisis on the U.S. border.

Making matters worse, Honduras endured two powerful hurricanes within two weeks in late 2020.

### PREACHING, HEALING, DIGNITY

Health care was a challenge, even pre-pandemic, in rural locales such as Olancho, the largest of Honduras' 18 departments, or states. Among its people are indigenous groups such as the Pech, who often lack resources to pay for adequate medical care.

That's why Doris Clark, a member of the Northlake Church of Christ in Atlanta, and her husband, the late Dr. Robert Clark, moved to Catacamas — a town surrounded by Olancho's rugged mountains — 35 years ago to launch Predisan, which takes its name from the Spanish words for "preach" and "heal." Along with Madrid, Predisan's founding medical director, they planted ministries for addiction recovery, medical care and community development.

In 2003, Predisan opened the Good Samaritan Medical Center, a 20,000-square-foot facility that offers primary and specialty care and training for medical workers. For nearly two decades, visiting teams of U.S. physicians have worked alongside

Predisan's Honduran staff to provide surgical and dental services.

In the midst of the pandemic, the ministry has adapted its services. With most schools meeting only online, Predisan set up tents behind the small chapel at the Good Samaritan facility and created outdoor classrooms and a tutoring program for students who don't have reliable internet access.

Predisan established a pastoral network of preachers who serve in the mountain villages. The group offers financial training and pools its resources to provide microloans for ministers to plant coffee and supplement their income.

"Predisan, through the Gospel, has brought dignity to a people, has brought hope to a people," said Julio Benitez, a ministry chaplain and psychologist. "And all of this has given new lenses to the people of this community."

Before the surgical team began its work, Benitez preached to socially distanced, masked Hondurans waiting for their procedures. He quoted Jeremiah 29:11: "*For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a*

*future.*" The verse follows 28 chapters of misery, suffering and hopelessness that the children of Israel endured at the hands of their enemies.

"As you can see," Benitez said, "in the history of the children of God, it has always been that way."

### 'WE CANNOT SAY NO'

Nowhere is that sense of hopelessness more acutely felt than the San Francisco hospital in Juticalpa, about an hour west of Catacamas. It's the only facility in Olancho with a COVID-19 ward, serving a region of more than half-a-million souls.

During the *Chronicle's* visit, several patients convalesced in hallways between rooms. When asked about the ward's capacity, coordinator Dr. Vilma Bendeck said, "We are living this right now. The limit here is 50. We have 56. We cannot say no."

Dr. Franco, Predisan's medical director, said that many Hondurans "feel that if they have COVID, that's the end; they don't have tomorrow."

Their families suffer, too. Franco's mother, Paulina, the namesake of his daughter, was hospitalized with the virus for 15 days in the city of Santa Rosa de Copán.

"I think that was one of my hardest moments," the physician said. "I couldn't stay with her in the room."



Madrid



Benitez



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

A patient waits outside the COVID-19 vaccination center at the Polyclinic in Catacamas, overseen by Predisan.

Thankfully, a fellow doctor helped him set up a visit with her via mobile devices using WhatsApp. He tried to convince her that the hospital was the best place for her to be.

In the Juticalpa ward, Franco talked with 56-year-old Rosa Ramirez as she recuperated in the unit's recovery area, a room once used for pediatrics. She said she was thankful for the visit and that she's praying for all Hondurans to keep taking precautions against COVID-19.

"It's a real illness," she said, "not just a game." Before leaving her bedside, Franco spoke a few words to her, softly, in Spanish.

"I was encouraging her to be patient," the doctor said. "She wants to go home."



Franco

## VACCINES FOR MOTHERS

In homes across Olancho, a new pandemic challenge may be on the horizon — a baby boom.

Two hours from Juticalpa, in the mountain town of Culmi, workers at a rural clinic overseen by Predisan are performing 16 to 18 ultrasounds per day, said Dr. Cruz Barahona. Access to contraception has been limited during the pandemic, he said.

The clinic is a part of a network of facilities overseen by Predisan since 2014, when Honduran health authorities launched a decentralization



AUDREY JACKSON

Nurse supervisor Nancy Maldonado moves monitoring equipment between rooms in the Juticalpa COVID-19 ward.

initiative and offered the ministry the chance to step in. The government provides some funds, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Predisan trains staff and uses its own funds to provide chaplains for the rural clinics and maternity centers, where expectant mothers from remote villages can wait, under a physician's supervision, for their babies to be born.

In recent months, as COVID-19 vaccines have become more widely available, workers in the clinics have prioritized getting pregnant women immunized. Hesitancy is a problem, said Dr. Oscar Guifarro, a coordinator for Health Center Emmanuel, a clinic in Catacamas that Predisan began supervising in 2016.

"Unfortunately, a pregnant woman died a month ago from COVID-19," Guifarro said. As news spread, demand for the vaccine among pregnant women increased.

At a maternity center in Catacamas, the *Chronicle* spoke to two pregnant women. One, waiting for her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine, said she was doing it for her

unborn child and her three children at home. Another woman said she didn't yet want to receive the vaccine "porque no," a Spanish phrase similar to "just because."

## STRESSFUL, UNCOMFORTABLE, LOVE

In addition to administering vaccines, workers with Predisan helped set up the San Francisco hospital's COVID-19 ward and managed it for a year. The ministry continues to provide chaplains for the unit.

Madrid, Predisan's CEO, has visited several times. She remembered an early visit when a female patient, struggling to breathe, grabbed her arm.

"Do you want me to pray for you?" Madrid asked. The woman nodded.

"She couldn't even get the words out," said Madrid, who clasped her hand and prayed. She read to her from the Bible, one of the Psalms, and noticed other patients listening — plus some of the staff.

Inside the ward, one of the attending physicians, Dr. Noel Olivera, said the chaplains' visits help remind him why he straps on layers of hot protective gear for shifts of 12 hours at a time.

"It's stressful and uncomfortable," Olivera said, "but I'm doing this for love." Thanks in part to the spiritual inspiration, "most of these people will return to their families," he said, motioning toward the recovery room.

Dennis Rojas, a lab tech, agreed. He cleans and comforts the patients, and the chaplains help remind him that he's "proud to be a soldier in the war against the pandemic," he said.

Madrid thought she would have to beg — or cast lots — to get chaplains for the COVID-19 ward. That hasn't been the case. They're eager, she said. They ask continually, "When is it my time to go?"

Rivera, at the end of his latest rotation as chaplain, stood outside the ward as a hospital worker sprayed him with a mist of water and bleach. Then he stripped off his gloves and gowns and placed them in a barrel. It's a procedure he's done before — and plans to keep doing as long as he's needed.

"I feel most fortunate for the opportunity to pray and preach the Gospel," he said. "I feel really proud to have the opportunity to come and be with these patients."





Nancy Maldonado pauses to put on her face shield outside before entering the COVID unit.



Breathing tubes conceal a critical patient's face from sight.



A patient raises her hands in prayer during a visit from Carlos Rivera, one of the rotating chaplains.

# Covering COVID: Inside an ICU

BY AUDREY JACKSON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

JUTICALPA, Honduras

It seems like an unnecessary risk," one of the doctors told me the night before Erik Tryggstad and I headed to the COVID-19 unit at Hospital Regional San Francisco.

Driving to the hospital, these words echoed in my head and joined a chorus of my own doubts: Was this necessary? Were we motivated by some misplaced sense of duty? Did we actually need to go inside?

Erik shared my hesitancy. "We can decide at the hospital how close we actually need to be," he said.

Why exactly I was nervous, I'm still unsure. I'm young and fully vaccinated. The worst fate that could have awaited me was an isolated room for two weeks. And yet, as the van pulled into the parking lot, it felt like we were on the cusp of death.

Indeed we were, just not our own.

A doctor and chaplain guided us through the hospital to another parking lot, where we were provided personal protective equipment, or PPE, and instructions on how to don it properly. Fastening our face shields, we met a doctor outside an open doorway and followed her inside.

I'd rehearsed this scene in my head based on my knowledge of U.S. hospitals: We'd enter the building, where there would be a series of doors cordoning off different sectors,



PHOTOS BY AUDREY JACKSON

Audrey Jackson and Erik Tryggstad prepare to enter the COVID-19 ward.

giving me the option to stop before we reached a point of no return. Perhaps I'd watched too much TV.

Instead, Erik and I walked through the doorway directly into the middle of the ICU.

The room was small and crowded, lined by 10 beds sharing too little space, monitored by frantic doctors with too little equipment. Patients wore the bare minimum: hospital underwear and sheets. The air-conditioning, like the ward, was overwhelmed by the fevered bodies. The doctors told us hundreds had died.

Oxygen masks hissed, machines beeped, and doctors — wearing two masks and a face shield — yelled to be heard. The patients couldn't breathe.

And neither could I.

I was not prepared for the sudden confrontation with such a concentrated amount of human suffering. I had reported on coronavirus testing and spoken with relatives of people who had died. But I hadn't seen COVID-19 until I looked into a patient's eyes and saw no one looking back.

As I struggled to comprehend what I was seeing, I reminded myself to do

my job. "Find the shots that show the story. Respect the patients' privacy," I thought at least a dozen times.

The 30 minutes inside felt both like an instant and an eternity. Every wheezing cough and ragged breath slowed time. Every monitor alarm and oxygen mask hiss accelerated it.

When we left, we were welcomed back outside by diluted bleach spray, trash cans for PPE and a plastic bag to quarantine my camera. The goal was to leave with nothing more than the knowledge and imagery of what was inside.

I spent my evening trying to understand what I had experienced and why it mattered. Not until later that evening, when we were reunited with a Predisan Health Ministries team, did I find the answer.

"What was it like?" one person asked. "How was the hospital equipped?" another wondered. "How many patients did they have?"

With the outflow of questions, I found I had answers. The COVID unit for this region's 500,000 people had 50 beds — 10 of those designated for critical patients — with zero ventilators. Overflow patients were being put in the hall.

I knew what the inside looked like, and I had the skills to express it. That is why we had to take the risk — it was a story that needed to be known.

**AUDREY JACKSON** is associate editor of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [audrey@christianchronicle.org](mailto:audrey@christianchronicle.org).



## Program Director and House Parents

*Mid-Western Children's Home is seeking mission-minded members of the Church of Christ with a heart to serve children in a safe, nurturing Christian environment that protects and heals troubled children and helps them know God and Jesus through His Word.*

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[mr.al.brown@gmail.com](mailto:mr.al.brown@gmail.com)

You can also call him at:

512-804-6818





Widow and seven orphans waiting for a new house

**We've got too much work to do, so 100%\* will go to save more orphans and widows from the streets.**

*\*Not one thin dime from your Orphan Sunday free-will offering will be used for administrative costs.*

**We need to take 50 more orphan and widow families off the street, out of the gutters and mud huts and give them a home and safe place to live and grow up in.**

## *21st Annual Churches of Christ* **Orphan Sunday** *Miracle* Nov 14, 2021

is now under construction and we need to get desks, books and Bibles to equip the school. We have children's homes to repair and renovate, a new medical clinic to supply and many, many more projects.

We need to provide the children with more uniforms and school fees so they can have an education and a more fruitful life.

We've got 20 homes to build for widows with children. A school for 150 more children



New 150 student school

**That's why we need you to be part of this year's Orphan Sunday.**

*Thank you, Dave Board, President*

*Each month we will report on projects underway and in planning when you become a part of this work.*

Just email or call Tim or Kelvin, and we will sign you up for this year's Orphan Sunday materials and our latest newsletters for you and your leadership. Go to [orphanslifeline.org/orphan-sunday](http://orphanslifeline.org/orphan-sunday) for photos and more information.



**Tim Murphy**

timm@orphanslifeline.org  
Cell: 406-871-0248

**Kelvin Hoover**

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Cell: 406-220-2143



AUDREY JACKSON

Robin Pawlikowski's eyewear reflects surgery as she assists with an abdominal hysterectomy at the Good Samaritan Medical Center in Catacamas, Honduras.

# Foreign operations: health care in Honduras

**LONG-AWAITED SURGICAL TEAM** *returns to Predisan Health Ministries despite pandemic.*

BY AUDREY JACKSON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

## CATACAMAS, Honduras

**M**etallic clanging echoed through the surgical ward as Dr. Chad Eustis hammered the arm of the operating table against the floor to loosen a stuck mechanism. The first step to practicing surgery in a developing nation is to operate on the equipment.

Eustis, who started leading surgical trips to this Central American

city in 2007, was unfazed.

Within an hour, his team would be treating patients in both operating rooms at the Good Samaritan Medical Center, owned by Predisan Health Ministries, which is associated with Churches of Christ.

This surgical team from Atlanta-based Jackson Healthcare was the last to visit before the COVID-19 pandemic and the first to return in a year and a half.

Arriving as the delta variant surged

across the U.S. and Honduras, the 11 team members had to show proof of vaccination as they entered the country. Before leaving for home, they would have to get a nasal swab test for COVID-19. A positive result could confine them to Honduras for two weeks or more.

Dr. Amanda Madrid, CEO of Predisan, thanked them for taking the risk. Many patients had been anticipating the team's return, she said. Others had died awaiting treatment.

Alejandrina Castillo had waited 15 years.

Her home in the mountains of Honduras made access to health care difficult, and a failed surgery made her wary. A doctor at a private clinic told her the surgery would cost 50,000 lempira, or around \$2,100 U.S. — money that she did not have, Castillo said.

"Money here is very scarce," said Castillo, who required treatment for

CONTINUED





Ryan Dadds, left, and Dr. Chad Eustis, right, lean against a monumental cross in Catacamas, Honduras.



Dr. Chad Eustis, far right, prays in English with patients while Carlos Ponce, right, translates the prayer into Spanish at the Good Samaritan Medical Center owned by Predisan Health Ministries. After the prayer, the Jackson Healthcare team changed into surgical gowns and prepped the operating rooms for surgery.



Oscar Enrique Pagoada Bonilla shows off his prosthesis. An accident in 2008 led to the amputation of his left leg.



Dr. Chad Eustis, left, points to the overhead surgical lighting, which went out mid-surgery, while Lesa Dale, middle, and Dr. Damon Simpson, right, focus on the patient undergoing a laparoscopic gallbladder removal. Adaptation in the operating room is just part of practicing medicine in developing nations, Eustis said.

**CONTINUED**

a pelvic organ prolapse. “We don’t have a lot of resources to go and pay for private clinics.”

Her only option was to seek care from a clinic that would perform the surgery pro bono.

Dr. Nadia Reyes at the Culmi Clinic, a health care center that Predisan oversees, encouraged her to seek the help of the surgical team at the Good Samaritan Medical Center.

Despite living five hours from the center in Catacamas by car — or nine hours if she had to travel part of the journey by horseback due to road conditions — Castillo resolved to be treated by the visiting North American surgeons.

“I used to pray a lot to God to give me a solution,” Castillo said. “I felt this was the time when God gave me the answer.”

The surgical team gathered for a devotional at the beginning of the day in the medical center’s chapel.

Afterward, Eustis led a prayer with the patients before the group changed into surgical gowns and prepped the operating rooms.

Castillo was the first patient of the day.



PHOTOS BY AUDREY JACKSON

Alejandrina Castillo smiles while resting in the post-op recovery room.

#### FROM A WHEELCHAIR TO WALKING

With 45 patients scheduled across four days of surgery, team members made the most of their time at the clinic, working 12 hours one day to stay on schedule.

It was after dark when they arrived back at Hotel Plaza Maria on the third day. Despite the long hours in surgery, Eustis climbed back into a Predisan van after dinner with a translator, intent on visiting a former patient.

He leaned forward in anticipation

as the van rolled down the dimly lit streets of Catacamas before turning into a narrow side road.

“This is it,” Eustis said.

Stepping out of the vehicle, he embraced Oscar Enrique Pagoada Bonilla and clapped him on the back before they walked inside together.

The first time Bonilla saw Eustis was in 2008, when his father helped him into a wheelchair outside the gates of the Good Samaritan center.

“It was the exact time when the bus stopped and all the Americans were coming by,” Bonilla said.

Little did he know then that Eustis, a general surgeon who practices trauma and acute care in South Carolina, would play a critical role in his life.

A truck had hit Bonilla earlier that year while he rode a motorcycle, breaking his left leg in two places. His family pooled their finances to send him four hours away to a hospital in Tegucigalpa, where surgeons amputated his leg below the knee. But the procedure left him with chronic infections and pain.

The problem, Eustis said, was that

the Honduran doctors kept cleaning out the infection and resealing the wound without treating the cause of the infection: a metal rod known as an intramedullary nail inserted alongside the bone.

Though the rod is the golden standard for stabilizing closed femur fractures, it is only recommended for open fractures if the wound is cleaned within eight hours of injury, Eustis said. Bonilla’s open fracture was not.

While the team from Jackson Healthcare in 2008 was able to treat the infection, Bonilla needed to see an orthopedic surgeon.

Since Eustis lacked the specialization to correct the prior procedure, Madrid had one request: Take Bonilla to the U.S. where there are surgeons who can.

Eustis, a nondenominational Christian, described the following events as nothing less than miraculous.

Connections through one of Eustis’ patients in the U.S. helped secure a visa for Bonilla. A donor in Texas bought Bonilla’s plane ticket. The CEOs of both hospitals where Bonilla received treatment — the Oak Tree

Hospital and the Baptist Health Hospital in Corbin, Ky. — donated their care.

Twelve years later, Bonilla’s injury is undetectable with the aid of a prosthesis. But to Bonilla’s family, the miracle was their introduction to the visiting surgeon.

“For us, the biggest miracle was actually meeting him,” said José de Jesús Pagoada, Bonilla’s father. “It is also a miracle that my son can walk. He has a family. He has a wife. He has kids. He has a job. He doesn’t need help from anybody else.”

**AN ANSWER TO PRAYER**

Back at the medical center, Castillo proclaimed the surgical team’s presence in Honduras as a blessing. She recounted the medical challenges she had faced for years while lying in the postoperative recovery room that workers finished renovating mere days before the surgical team arrived.

“I have no way to pay, but I know God will be able to,” Castillo said. “God is going to bless them. I pray that the North American teams keep coming here, to bless people and solve problems like mine.”

Despite the long recovery that lay ahead of her, Castillo said she was hopeful that this surgery would allow her to lead a more active lifestyle with her grandchildren and church.

“There is not one single patient who could have had the surgeries they had without your presence here,” Madrid said to the surgical team on the final day at the center. “Those were people who were really waiting for you.”

Tears ran down Castillo’s cheeks. The visiting doctors and nurses, she said, were an answer to prayer.

“God has not abandoned me.”

**PREDISAN CELEBRATES** 35 years of ministry through Dec. 31. For more information, see [predisan.org](#).



Health care professionals listen with patients to a devotional led by Julio Benitez, a chaplain and staff psychologist at the Good Samaritan Medical Center.



# AFGHANISTAN: Family members killed, stranded in airport attack

FROM PAGE 1

John said he worries, too. "I've been a lot of bad places," said the Distinguished Flying Cross recipient. He spent 41 years in the Air Force before retiring with his wife to the Nashville, Tenn., area, where the couple attends the College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon when COVID-19 allows.

"I've been to Somalia — Mogadishu in 1993 when the Blackhawk Down episode happened," added John, who flew the first of his 337 combat missions in Vietnam. "I've been to Haiti, to Cambodia. ... There is horrible devastation in all those places."

But nowhere is like Afghanistan. "I think Afghanistan is worse because they've endured generations of war," he said. "A 40-year-old in Afghanistan has known nothing but war."

The Bradleys' faith — which they've shared since they first met at an Air Force base in Louisiana and married at the Blanchard Church of Christ in Shreveport in 1975 — motivates them.

"Top Gun meets Jesus" is how longtime minister Ken Durham, a former Bible faculty member at Lipscomb University in Nashville, describes John.

"He's a man with a passion that comes right out of the heart of Jesus when it comes to helping people," Durham said.

Retired Major Gen. Eric Overturf of Arlington, Va., who flew with John, echoed that sentiment.

"He's a selfless servant leader who has dedicated himself to taking care of people," Overturf said of John. "He lives the way he thinks — what would Jesus do? He never says it out loud, but he's dedicated first and foremost to trying to do the right thing, whether it's a wingman trying to get through bad weather or in Afghanistan."

## BOOTS FOR LAMIA

John Bradley's first five trips to Afghanistan were to visit airmen under his command. The three-star general oversaw 75,000 reservists



JOHN BRADLEY

Jan Bradley meets students at a school in Afghanistan's Parwan Province, where she and her husband handed out school supplies.

worldwide. On one of those trips, he joined a group of airmen and soldiers distributing humanitarian aid near the Bagram air base north of Kabul.

That's where he met a 9-year-old girl who pushed through a crowd of boys to beg for boots, like the ones Bradley was wearing, to protect her feet during the cold Afghan winter. Her name was Lamia.

When he returned home and told Jan about the encounter, she began gathering blankets, clothing and other materials — 40,000 pounds of supplies — for the Afghans Lamia came to personify.

But before gathering the materials for that first shipment from thrift stores, discount stores and church members and before washing, folding and stacking everything in the Bradleys' basement, the couple readied four boxes of basic provisions for Lamia and her family. They got boots in three sizes to be sure she'd have a pair that fit and Aveeno lotion for her wind-ravaged face. Those boxes were sent to Bagram with instructions to find Lamia. Then, on his next trip, the general took Lamia a bicycle.

With John's retirement imminent in 2008, the Bradleys decided, in what John describes as a five-minute conversation, to spend the rest of their lives helping the people of

Afghanistan. They created the Lamia Afghan Foundation.

In the years since, the foundation has collected more than 3.5 million pounds of humanitarian aid and ferried it to Afghanistan on a space-available basis through the Denton Program, which allows any U.S. nonprofit to send aid abroad. The foundation also built seven schools and clinics, sent an ambulance and an ultrasound machine, provided prosthetics for war-scarred children and built relationships with other organizations and Afghans who became the Bradleys' partners and dear friends.

The foundation's seventh school was completed on the Friday before Kabul fell on a recent Sunday. On the Monday of its scheduled opening for 1,100 girls, the school sat empty.

"I'm hopeful things will be settled and the girls can go to school," John told the *Chronicle* that Sunday. "I'm an optimistic person, but I'm not real optimistic about things there. I'm trying to be realistic."

## BROKEN PROMISES

The Bradleys' frustration with promises made by the State Department and Department of Defense to evacuate partners and volunteers is palpable.

"I'm deeply disappointed that the

airlift ended," John said. "A lot of people will review what's happened the last few months, the last few years. People say we should have started the evacuation before we pulled troops out — that's my opinion."

Leigh Ann Kosmas, the Bradleys' daughter, took more than a week off work from her job as senior communications director for Kutak Rock LLP, a nationwide law firm based in Minneapolis, to help file the

requested paperwork.

"One of the hardest parts for me," Kosmas said, "was putting together the documents. I have their names, dates, date of birth, photos and what they'll wear to the airport. And



Kosmas

there are so many children, and I see their faces. And now, in hindsight, I know they don't have a shot because it didn't work."

Two children did get a shot, not because of paperwork but because of an explosion that killed 13 U.S. service members and scores of Afghan civilians.

The children are the niece and nephew of an Afghan-American woman in Alexandria, Va. — Ferishta, whose last name is being withheld





TOM BRADLEY

When a suicide bomber set off an explosion at the Kabul airport gate Aug. 26, the young nephew and niece of Ferishta, right, had been lifted over the gate. A 19-year-old neighbor from Kabul, left, found them and traveled with them to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

because of security concerns. She came to the U.S. in 2013, taking advantage of the Special Immigrant Visa program that helps people whose lives are in danger because of their employment, usually with a U.S. company or the U.S. government.

Ferishta and Jan Bradley became good friends through charitable projects benefiting Afghanistan.

The Bradleys had tried to help Ferishta get her brother's family out of Afghanistan because she believed they were in danger. When the promised phone calls never came, the family took the papers they had and a letter from Bradley on his letterhead and went to the airport. A 19-year-old neighbor went with them.

After news broke Aug. 26 of a suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai international Airport, Ferishta called Jan, sobbing. She had spoken with her 14-year-old nephew. He believed his parents were dead. He couldn't find his younger brother and sister.

Days passed before Ferishta learned from the neighbor what had happened. Even before the explosion, he told her, crowds began pushing and shoving. Someone lifted her niece to Marines, who brought the girl over the wall, then the younger nephew and their mother. The 14-year-old could not get over the

wall before the bomb went off.

The neighbor climbed the wall and began searching for the two young children. He found them in the medical facility with the injured service members. By morning, he and the children were on a plane to Ramstein air base in Germany. A few days later, they flew to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. The mother had died. The father and oldest son spent the night in a safe house, calling hospitals — trying to locate the two young children.

"At least my niece and nephew are in this country — they are in safe hands," Ferishta told the *Chronicle*.

Tom Bradley, John's brother, takes Ferishta each day from Alexandria to Bethesda — a 25-mile trip — for the allowed one-hour visit with her niece and nephew.

"I don't know when the family will be united," she said. "Even yesterday it was so hard for me, and I carried a strong face to hide the pain of knowing that their mother is no longer with them. ... The kids still don't even know."

#### HELPING A FRIEND'S FAMILY

The other group the Bradleys helped get out was the family of a Houston doctor the couple met in 2008 when they took a woman to the hospital in



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOHN BRADLEY

Tens of thousands of girls have gone to schools built by Lamia Afghan Foundation, John Bradley said. Two of the girls, twin sisters Husnia and Zuhall, came to the U.S. and went to college. Bradley helped their father, an interpreter for the U.S. Army, and the rest of the family get visas to live in the U.S.

Afghanistan where he worked.

The doctor was on call when they brought her in with a rare condition that required extensive tests and surgery. John Bradley told the doctor, whose name is being withheld because of security concerns, he would pay for it.

Afterward, they stayed in touch. The doctor moved to the U.S. in 2012, and the retired general wrote a letter of recommendation that helped him get a residency in New York.

Then in June, the doctor's wife and five children, all U.S. citizens, went back to Afghanistan for a brother's wedding. Their scheduled return flight on Aug. 15, the day the Taliban took over, never happened.

The doctor needed to get his wife and children home but also his brothers' families, who were in jeopardy because of their work for American nonprofits — 18 people in all, 12 of them children.

The doctor worked all day at the Kingwood hospital in suburban Houston, where he is an internal medicine specialist. Meanwhile, the Bradleys filed applications and worked the phones. Then, at the end of the doctor's workday, it was morning in Afghanistan, so his calls would begin.

"We were all working 24-7, nonstop, with a lot of stress," the doctor said.

A variety of circumstances, including efforts by the Bradleys, led to the 18 family members getting through.

When he heard about the explosion at the airport, the doctor said he knew his family had been there just 12 hours earlier. A friend told him, "This is exactly the spot. They had to cross the sewage canal — had to pass the kids from one side to the other in the middle of the night."

"If my family was delayed by 12 hours," the doctor said, "I would have no one by now."

He worries about his three sisters and their families still in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban are very smart this time," he said. "They can use smartphones. They can track people. It's very dangerous."

#### 'THE BEST PERSON I'VE EVER KNOWN'

The danger is not new. The Bradleys have lost close friends and volunteers to Taliban retribution before. They quit traveling to Afghanistan themselves several years ago, not only for their own safety but because it endangered their Afghan partners to be seen with them.

A school, a job training facility for men and women and a medical clinic in western Afghanistan were built by Abdul Fatah Haidari, who

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**Boone Church of Christ, Attn: Elders  
130 Cool Woods Drive, Boone, NC 28607**

**[boonechurch@bellsouth.net](mailto:boonechurch@bellsouth.net)**

## DANGER: 'If we can, we'll help them'

FROM PAGE 21

was slain in his office.

The man who built the foundation's first school and renovated the second, Sherwali Wardak, was a member of the Afghan Parliament. He died when an explosive detonated in the box that opened gates to his home.

A third man, the Bradleys' closest friend in Afghanistan, was an American physician named Jerry Umanos.

Umanos and his wife relocated to Kabul after practicing for 25 years in an inner-city Christian health clinic in Chicago. He spent eight years at an Afghan hospital run by CURE, a nonprofit that builds hospitals in developing countries, and was killed by a security guard in 2014.

"He was the very best person I have ever known in my life," John said.

"He saved more lives in Afghanistan than any American ever has, teaching other doctors in five hospitals how to save the lives of women in childbirth."

### 'YOU CAN'T WIN A WAR BY FIGHTING'

So much has gone badly, and not just in the summer of 2021.

Jan said she wishes that back in 2001 there had been a Marshall Plan for Afghanistan, a plan to rebuild a devastated country like the program that rebuilt Europe after World War II.

"You can't win a war by fighting," she said. "In order to beat extremism, you have to eliminate the desperation of poverty and illiteracy."

John said he agrees. And because he was working in the Pentagon in 2001, he saw the focus shift from Afghanistan to Iraq. He saw the history before it was history. Generals understand such things.

"We should have not tried to set up a Jeffersonian democracy," he said emphatically. "Everyone has tried

to conquer Afghanistan. No one has been successful. No one ever will be."

In 2011, the Bradleys made their case in Washington, encouraging lawmakers to provide funds for food, education and clean water.

"All the people at the top — it went in one ear and out the other," Jan said. "Most had never been to

Afghanistan, and if they had, they had not been outside the wire."

Still, in 2016, the Bradleys were hopeful.

"Five years ago, there was great hope and promise in Afghanistan," Jan recalled. "For women and girls, the country was moving forward. We were building schools, putting prosthetics on children."

How the end came so quickly is difficult for them to understand. But it did. The work, however, has not.

"People have no jobs," Jan said.

"They're hungry. They're starving. So the funds we're receiving we're trying to get to Afghanistan to feed people."

She's been assured by the State Department that U.S. officials are working on a way to get money into the country. Meanwhile, John refuses to give up hope.

"I'm disappointed in a lot of things," he said, "but you ask if we're hopeful — I'm hopeful."

John plans to use resources to help in Afghanistan if they can, and if they can't, to use them to help Afghan refugees in the U.S. He knows not all will be welcoming. But many Christians have reached out, offering their homes and other support for refugees.

"There are good-hearted Americans who want to help," the retired general said. "And if we can, we'll help them."


**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, contact the Lamia Afghan Foundation at [lamia.org](http://lamia.org), 4014 Skyline Drive, Nashville, TN 37215, or call (817) 929-4252.



JOHN BRADLEY

**In an Afghanistan refugee camp, Jan Bradley hugs a boy who had lost both of his arms. Thousands of Afghan children have been killed or seriously injured during decades of conflict.**





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# 9/11: Christians pause to remember the thousands of lives lost

FROM PAGE 3

reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Retired Gen. Roger A. Brady, who at one time commanded all U.S. Air Forces in Europe, told the crowd that every generation experiences a defining moment — be it the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor for his parents' generation or the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy for his own generation.

"We talk about my parents' generation ... as perhaps the Greatest Generation, and I don't dispute that at all," said Brady, a member of the Brooks Avenue church. "We're beholden to them, and we stand on their shoulders."

But he praised the "9/11 generation" and the hundreds of thousands of men and women who volunteered for service in an era with no draft.

Brady recalled a husband and wife — both C-17 pilots — who had left active duty before Sept. 11. After the attacks, they decided not to retire.

"They said, 'Can we stay? We've trained our whole lives for this, and we can't leave now,'" Brady said. "We said, 'Sure. Come on back. We need you.'"

"And there were many who did that. They were like the firefighters who ran back into the tower. They were like the nurses who showed up. They were like all the people who said, 'It's time for us to serve.'"

## LESSONS AT GROUND ZERO

About 600 miles away in New York, 11 students from Harding University in Searcy, Ark. — all too young to remember 9/11 — visited the Sept. 11 memorial.

The students' educational trip also included meeting the firefighters of Engine 54, Ladder 4, Battalion 9 in Midtown Manhattan. That firehouse lost 15 of its own on 9/11, the biggest loss in the New York City Fire Department.

"One of the most impactful experiences for me in the museum was hearing the voices of the friends and family members of those that died that day," said Everett Kirkman, 21, a member of the Downtown Church



Kirkman



MADISON MEYER

The firehouse of Engine 54, Ladder 4, Battalion 9 in Midtown Manhattan lost 15 of its own on Sept. 11, 2001.

of Christ in Searcy. "Reading a story about someone is one thing — and can be moving in itself — but hearing the tone, and the love in each person's voice that spoke, was powerful."

Sara McClaran, 20, whose home congregation is the A&M Church of Christ in College Station, Texas, said: "One of the most powerful things to me was hearing the messages of the passengers on the plane that went down (in Pennsylvania) — Flight 93. I have no doubt that each one knew they were going to die, and yet in their calls, there was no panic or terror or really much fear."

"There was just a calm certainty — a peace, if you will — as they made sure their family knew they were loved. Those passengers knew their fate, they accepted it, and they worked to make sure no one else died with them. Peace and courage like that is extraordinary."

Like the students, millions across the U.S. — and around the world — solemnly marked the anniversary.

"After 20 years let's not forget," David Shannon, president of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., said on Facebook. "Say a prayer for our land today and especially the families and friends

who lost so much on 9/11. May God bless America."

## 'TOO IMPORTANT A DAY TO LET GO'

Back in North Carolina, Lisa Brewer, a member of the Wilkesboro Church of Christ, welcomed the return of the bluegrass festival, which she directs. The COVID-19 pandemic forced its cancellation last year.

Ticket sales for the outdoor festival raise thousands of dollars a year to support the Carolina Bible Camp and Retreat Center, which is associated with Churches of Christ.

Given the 9/11 anniversary, the festival offered free admission this year to active-duty military, law enforcement and first responders.

"It's too important a day to let go without recognition," said Lisa, whose husband, Greg, a Wilkesboro deacon, serves on the Carolina Bible Camp board.

When the hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center, Vickers, the Winston-Salem news anchor, was working as a journalist across the



Brewer

Hudson River in New Jersey.

"I could see the flames," said Vickers, a nondenominational Christian.

Her older brother, retired Army Spc. Ripton Vickers, served in Afghanistan and South Korea. She wrote a children's book, "Why My Hero Had To Go," inspired by her nephew Jared's dismay over his father leaving to serve overseas. She read that book to children at the festival.

Gary Scruggs, a member of the Kannapolis Church of Christ and a bluegrass festival volunteer, worked as a contractor in Afghanistan for two years. His son, retired Army Capt. Ben Scruggs, served nine months in Afghanistan as part of the war launched in response to the attacks.

The older Scruggs said he appreciated the recognition given to the military at the festival.

"I know we can sometimes overdo it," he said. "But I think we need to keep showing our respect for the military and keep that instilled in our young people. This is an all-volunteer group, and we may need volunteers again."

*Journalist April Fatula in New York City contributed to this report.*



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**North Jasper Street Church of Christ**  
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**Stafford Church of Christ**  
**staffordcoc316@gmail.com**  
**620-549-6625 or 620-546-5052**

**All-Purpose Minister - Seminole, Texas**

Looking for an **All-Purpose Minister** who can relate across the generational spectrum of our congregation. The elders are looking for assistance to reinvigorate the congregation as we come out of the pandemic and are coming back together. The successful candidate will be well grounded in Biblical doctrine and have the ability to share that doctrine in a loving and practical way with the unchurched and also with those who confess Christ but have an understanding that is critically different.

**Westside Church of Christ, Attn: Tom Keyes**  
**905 SW 10th St, Seminole, Texas 79360**  
**tomkeyes@sbcglobal.net**

**FULL-TIME MINISTER  
HOWELL, MICHIGAN**

The church of Christ in Howell, Michigan, is looking for a pulpit minister who will work with the elders to motivate the church both spiritually and numerically. We are a close, loving congregation in a soul-rich environment. Salary and benefits are negotiable. Check us out at our website, [howellchurchofchrist.org](http://howellchurchofchrist.org). If you are interested, please submit a resume, a sermon, and salary/benefits needed to:

**Search Committee**  
**PO Box 82, Howell, MI 48844**  
**belcher0804@att.net**

**Family and Youth Minister**

Seeking a full-time Family and Youth Minister (FYM). This immediately available position provides an opportunity to join a healthy, active, rooted church family and "hit the ground running" with a united eldership, deacons, ministry leaders and involved parents who are interested in sharing the gospel. Please email resumes to:

**Mark Littleton**  
**marklittleton1@icloud.com**  
**acocn.org/5007-2/**  
*Athens Church of Christ - Athens, Tenn.*

**Full-time Minister-Monroe, Ga.**

The Monroe Church of Christ seeks to hire a full-time minister. Our church is a friendly, outgoing and working church. We are a congregation of 100 members in a growing community east of Atlanta and west of Athens. Our requirements of a new minister are that he should be of strong personal faith and be doctrinally-sound and well grounded in the Scriptures. Our church website is: [churchofchristmonroega.org](http://churchofchristmonroega.org). Please send resume to:

**Monroe Church of Christ**  
**PO Box 851 (813 Broad St)**  
**Monroe, Georgia 30655**

**Seeking Full-Time Minister  
Coffeyville, Kansas**

The Coffeyville Church of Christ is located in Southeast Kansas. We are a loving congregation of 80+ members who want to grow. We are involved in community service, mission work, Leadership Training for Christ and a local youth camp. We provide a competitive salary including a parsonage. We are an established congregation with three elders and three deacons.

For more information or to submit a resume, call or email Clinton Kastler at:  
**(620) 515-8858**  
**cekastler@gmail.com**

**Full-time Pulpit Minister**

The **Covington Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time pulpit minister. We have two elders, two deacons and approximately 40 members. The ideal candidate must hold fast to Biblical truths, preach and teach from God's Word only. He must also be willing to visit and assist in church growth. Retirement or other source of income may be needed. If you are interested in the position, please send resume with references to:

**Covington Church of Christ**  
**1643 S Carpenter Dr**  
**Covington, VA 24426**  
**540-962-1865**

# Milestones

Showcase the lives of your loved ones — birth and wedding announcements, anniversaries, memorials, honors for longtime ministers and workers and more. Contact [tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org](mailto:tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org) for rates and more information.

## Anniversary

**Bill and Caren Black** celebrated their 60th anniversary recently. They are members of the Park Hills Church of Christ in Missouri.



## Memorials

### Carl Agee 1941-2021

Carl Edward Agee was born in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 12, 1941, and passed into eternity on Aug. 31, 2021. His life and memory will be treasured by his wife of almost 58 years, Marie, his beloved children, David and Joanna, and their spouses Tracy and Beth. He loved his grandchildren Matthew, Christopher, Zanna, Esme and Oliver beyond measure and his two sisters, Judy Hoover and Jan Sarhan.

Carl graduated from Tennessee Tech and became an early pioneer in computer programming. After years at IBM, he launched his own company, System 3/X, in 1982.

He sang with the barbershop chorus Voices of the South and with the Hoover Songbirds. He created with stained glass and woodwork and loved best giving his creations away as gifts.

Carl's life was dedicated to and lived in service to his Lord. A Celebration of Life was held at the Homewood Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala. In lieu of flowers, Carl requested that memorial donations be made to Health Talents



International at P.O. Box 8303, Searcy, AR 72145 or through [www.healthtalents.org](http://www.healthtalents.org).

### Jimmie Joe Jones 1938-2021

Jimmie Joe Jones passed into the loving arms of God on April 6, 2021.

Born in Portales, N.M., on April 23, 1938, to Frank and Lorene Jones, the family lived

many places before Frank came to work on Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, Calif. Jimmie met the love of his life, Thelma McDowell

(daughter of Skip Neoma McDowell of Vallejo) at Vallejo High School, from where son, Victor, and daughter, Deborah, also graduated. The high school sweethearts celebrated their 64th anniversary last year.

Jimmie graduated from California State University, Sacramento, in 1960, continuing a career with the *Vallejo Times Herald*. Starting as a copyboy and retiring as publisher in 1994, his favorite position was entertainment editor, interviewing numerous celebrities. Jimmie's involvement in Vallejo was extensive, serving on many boards and establishing TJ's Designs custom embroidery business, providing personalized clothing and letterman jackets to the area from 1995 to 2015.

The role most dear to his heart was serving as a shepherd of the Lassen Street Church of Christ for 27-plus years before moving with extended family to Ward, Ark., in 2015 and worshipping with the Cabot Church of Christ.

Jimmie was preceded in death by his parents, parents-in-law and daughter-in-law, Alicia (Jimenez) Jones. He is survived by wife, Thelma (Arkansas); sister, Toni (Mike) Rehmus (California);



children Victor (Kim) Jones (California) and Deborah (Mitch) Turner (Arkansas); grandchildren Jeremy (Rebecca) Turner (Colorado); Stacie (Jeff) Coburn (Arkansas); Rachel (Saul) Avalos, Alyssa (Bryan) Luchini, Ryan (Alexis) Jones and Austin Jones (California); great-grandchildren Wyatt, Raelyn Coburn and Kayla (Tanner); and great-great-grandson Koe Booker, born the day before his passing, all of Arkansas.

Blessing New Mexico Christian Children's Home in his name would be a great honor. Funds may be sent to 1356 NM 236, Portales, NM 88130 or see [nmcch.org](http://nmcch.org).

### Ned McMillan 1933-2021

Ned Darrel McMillan, 88, of Melbourne, Florida, passed away on Aug. 9, 2021. Ned was preceded in death by his

parents, George W. McMillan and Edna R. McMillan and his brothers, Donald and David McMillan. He is survived by his wife, Lavella Hicks McMillan;

children Mark McMillan, John McMillan and Todd Reel; and grandchildren Lauren McMillan, Clay Reel and Ryan Reel.

Born in Fairview Community, Virginia, Ned was called to serve in the United States Army during the Korean War, rising to the rank of Master Sergeant. On returning home, he attended and graduated from East Tennessee State University with a degree in math and industrial arts. He relocated to Melbourne, Fla., to pursue a career with the Brevard County School System in 1969, and he retired from Central Junior High School in 1995.

*Continued on Page 27*



## CALENDAR

**Sept. 26-29 Harding Lectureship.** "Invincible! Courageous Faith in Troubled Times." Searcy, Ark. See [harding.edu/lectureship](http://harding.edu/lectureship).

**Sept. 27-28 KERYGMA Preaching Conference.** Memorial Road Church of Christ, Edmond, Okla. See [oc.edu/events/kerygma-preaching-conference-monday](http://oc.edu/events/kerygma-preaching-conference-monday).

**Oct. 9 Greater Houston Church Leadership Workshop.** 7 Keys to Sustained Church Growth. Contact [ocg.institute](http://ocg.institute) or call (281) 599-9914.

**Oct. 11-14 Abundant Living Retreat.** Woven Together. Branson, Mo. See [abundantlivingseniors.com](http://abundantlivingseniors.com) or call (501) 279-4055.

**Oct. 13 Benchmark Society - Kevin Sabin (Arvest Bank).** See [oc.edu/events/benchmark-society](http://oc.edu/events/benchmark-society).

**Oct. 14-15 Abilene Christian University Summit.** Seeking Hope, Finding Joy. See [oce.edu/summit](http://oce.edu/summit).

**Oct. 24 POSTPONED due to COVID - Greater Houston Sunday evening Campaign for Christ service.** Contact [bbaugh@baughengrs.com](mailto:bbaugh@baughengrs.com) for details.

**Nov. 5-7 24th Annual Cold Harbor Lectureship.** David: A Man with the Heart of God. Mechanicsville, Va. See [coldharborroadcoc.org](http://coldharborroadcoc.org) or call (804) 746-8224.

**Nov. 7 Blackwell Church of Christ, Centennial Plus One.** See [blackwellcoc.com](http://blackwellcoc.com) or call (580) 789-1029.

**Nov. 14 Orphan Sunday.** Orphan Sunday free-will offering. See [orphanslifeline.org/orphan-sunday](http://orphanslifeline.org/orphan-sunday).

**June 6-10, 2022 DATE CHANGE. Global Reunion.** Annual Camp for TCKs and families. See [oc.edu/globalreunion](http://oc.edu/globalreunion)

**June 11-17, 2022 Worship Leader Institute. Men's Advanced Leadership Training.** San Antonio, Texas. See [acapella.org/worship-leader-institute](http://acapella.org/worship-leader-institute).

**FULL CALENDAR:** [christianchronicle.org](http://christianchronicle.org)

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**Oct. 1 and Nov. 5**

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[tonya@christianchronicle.org](mailto:tonya@christianchronicle.org)



NEWSMAKERS



LAUREN NESBITT

Kira Perry, center, receives a first-place medal at the Illinois State Long Course Championship Swim Meet.

**AWARDED:** Kira Perry, 10, won first place in the 50 Freestyle, the 50 Butterfly and the 50 Backstroke and placed second in the 100 Freestyle, making her a three-time champion in the Illinois State Long Course Championship Swim Meet. Perry, the daughter of minister Douglas Perry and his wife, Barbara, attends the Pembroke Church of Christ.



**Baucum**



**Steelman**



**Williams**



**Gonzalez**

**NEW MINISTERS:** **Gipson Baucum**, pulpit minister for the Heritage Place Church of Christ in Irondale, Ala. **Chance Herron**, Bible chair associate for Buffs for Christ, a ministry that serves students at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas.

**APPOINTED:** **Mike Steelman** as the inaugural director for the accelerated Master of Architecture program at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. **Todd M. Brenneman** as dean of Faulkner University's V.P. Black College of Biblical Studies in Montgomery, Ala. **Anthony Williams** as the chief diversity officer at Abilene Christian University in Texas. Williams also is mayor of Abilene. **Shay Gonzalez** as director of stewardship and community partners at Lubbock Christian University in Texas.

Milestones

Continued from Page 26

We mourn his passing and will remember him as a kind, considerate man of faith. He was laid to rest at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery with military honors. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Melbourne Church of Christ or to the Love of Christ Food Pantry, payable to the Melbourne Church of Christ, 810 Hollywood Blvd., West Melbourne, FL 32904. Please indicate "In memory of Ned McMillan" on the memo line.

James 'Jim' Nicks  
1953-2021

James Lawrence Nicks, age 68, of Franklin, Tenn., went home to be with the Lord on Sept. 2, 2021. Jim was born in Bowling Green, Ky., on April 17, 1953, son of the late Lyle and Lucille Nicks. He graduated as a pharmacist from the University of Kentucky. He owned the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Franklin for 20 years, and he worked at Vanderbilt Hospital pharmacy for 13 years. Jim served as an elder of the



Heritage Church of Christ in Franklin and was in the first set of elders when Heritage was established in 2004. His grandchildren were the light of his life. He enjoyed gardening, traveling and collecting flow blue china. Jim is survived by his loving wife of 44 years, Betty (Billingsley) Nicks; daughters Sarah (Daniel) Dubois and Rachel (Charlie) Nix; siblings Sarah Nicks, Harold Nicks, Sally Tanaro, Frank Nicks, and Phillip Nicks; grandchildren Madeline, Benjamin, Amelia, Abigail, Caroline and Griffin; and numerous nieces and nephews. A funeral service was held Sept. 5, at the Heritage church's meeting place. Expressions of sympathy may take the form of donations to World Christian Broadcasting, Church of Christ Disaster Relief Effort Inc., Nashville Inner-city Ministry or Heritage Church of Christ, in loving memory of James Lawrence Nicks.

Henry 'Ken' Rhodes  
1931-2021

Dr. Henry Kenneth Rhodes, longtime preacher and pioneering faculty member at Lubbock Christian University in Texas, passed from this life on July 2, 2021. He was born in Frederick, Okla., to Bertis and Lalla Rhodes. The family moved to Roswell, N.M. As a teenager, he was invited to travel weekly to a Church of Christ

near Ruidoso, N.M., to lead singing. Before long, he had assumed weekly pulpit preaching responsibilities there until he left for Searcy, Ark., and Harding College in 1949. At Harding, Ken excelled in academics, chorus and photography. He worked in the college laundry to put himself through school. On weekends he was an itinerant preacher at numerous country churches. He graduated in 1952 from Harding, where he met his wife, Carolyn Poston. Dedicated to Christian education, the couple was called by Billy Mattox to join Lubbock Christian College in 1959 where Ken taught Bible and history and served as dean of students before a horse-riding accident disabled his academic career. Ken is survived by his wife of almost 69 years, Carolyn, their four sons and their families. Memorials can be made to Lubbock Christian University, 5601 19th St, Lubbock, TX 79407 or lcu.edu/giving.

**WITH APPRECIATION:** *The Christian Chronicle* acknowledges gifts received in honor of Glenda Mitchell and Bob and Judy Ross and in memory of Leona Carpenter, Elizabeth Davidson Bolding, Irene Gray Jason, Delia Leddy and Roberta Woodard.



Full-time Pulpit Minister Search - Puyallup, Washington

The **Puyallup Church of Christ** is announcing an open pulpit minister position. The Puyallup church, located in the south Puget Sound region of western Washington, is a growing, diverse group of believers and children of around 250. It is served by four elders, eight deacons, and an associate minister.

We are seeking a married man with a minimum experience of 5-10 years of full-time ministry, demonstrating excellent interpersonal and communication skills (both verbal and written). He should have a Bible degree from a brotherhood preaching school, college or university – Bachelor's required; Master's preferred. More importantly, his lessons should accurately reflect and convey biblical truths, the gospel of Christ, and the nature of God.

Responsibilities include: weekly preaching; teaching of Bible classes; supporting the Bible class ministry; encouraging the body through counseling opportunities (evangelism, premarital, etc.); reaching out and visiting members (who are shut-in, sick, or discouraged); and actively welcoming and engaging with visitors.

Salary commensurate with experience. Please send resume with references, and CD/DVDs of or links to two sermons to:

**Puyallup Church of Christ, Search Committee**  
402 5th Street SW, Puyallup, WA 98371 or via email: [office@puyallupcofc.org](mailto:office@puyallupcofc.org)

## EDITORIAL

# Tensions between Kingdom and country

At times, the tensions between Kingdom and country are more obvious than others. Recent events in Afghanistan have provided one clear moment of tension. Seeing desperate people cling to planes as others rushed for the airport offered searing images of hopelessness and fear.

The United States entered Afghanistan 20 years ago to hold accountable the terrorists responsible for killing 2,977 innocent American citizens on 9/11. The U.S. was joined by multiple nations who likewise deplore acts of terrorism. It was, for many Christians, the very thing governments are tasked by God to do: bear the sword and punish evildoers.

After two decades of fighting, officials of previous and present administrations determined it was best to leave. From a national interest perspective, it makes sense: trillions of dollars spent, thousands of lives lost — civilian and military — and little hope for improvement.

Our national interest appeared to no longer be served by staying.

It was time to leave. And while the final evacuation was far from seamless, officials insist it had to be done in the name of national security. Perhaps they are right.

After all, we have our own concerns within our own borders.

U.S. taxpayers prefer their tax money be spent on their own country's schools, infrastructure and social programs. The money spent overseas should be spent here at home on the people filling the U.S. treasury with their tax dollars. The

U.S. cannot be the world's police force.

Such is the logical concern of nations that seems valid through the lens of country.

But national interests too often conflict with the interests of the Kingdom of God. This month's edition of the *The Christian Chronicle* reminds us that among the crowd of frightened people racing toward the gates of the airport were friends and colleagues of our own brothers and sisters in Christ. Efforts to provide education, clothing and health care have now become far more challenging

**'In Afghanistan ... the name of Jesus is still spreading.'**



**JOIN US FOR A LIVE Q&A:** *The Christian Chronicle's* Editorial Board — Jeremie Beller, John Edmerson, Audrey Jackson, Trindi Mitchell, Bobby Ross Jr., Tamie Ross and Erik Tryggstad — will discuss this editorial at 4 p.m. Eastern/3 p.m. Central on Monday, Oct. 4. Watch at [facebook.com/christianchronicle](https://facebook.com/christianchronicle).

and dangerous. The U.S. departure reverberates far beyond the national security of one nation.

We do not pretend to have easy answers for these complex questions. But we do worry that our concern for country too often blinds us to the greater concerns of God's Kingdom.

Our commitment to Christ must change the way we watch these scenes unfold. The concern for the "least of these" must apply beyond our own borders. God's call to "love justice, seek mercy" means even far-off countries, refugees and immigrants. If we truly "seek first the Kingdom of God," then our actions and rhetoric must follow suit.

Thankfully, God's purpose has

never been dependent on governments of men. It is true that sometimes God works through governments — even evil empires — and sometimes he works around them.

Reports from Christians still in Afghanistan indicate that the name of Jesus is still spreading, and many people are putting on Christ in baptism, even during the chaos.

Whether or not the situation in Afghanistan is in our national interest, it is unquestionably in the interest of the Kingdom of God.

Our prayers are with our Afghan brothers and sisters now hiding across the country. Our prayers are also with their friends and neighbors in need of the hope found only in Christ. — **Jeremie Beller, for the Editorial Board**



SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO BY TRENT INNESS

**A refugee child is seen after the collapse of the Afghan government.**

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# 13 reflections after visiting 13 churches

MEMPHIS, Tenn.

After 15 years of full-time preaching, I accepted a new role with the Harding School of Theology and found myself in the awkward position of searching for a new church home.

I do not like the idea of the church being a marketplace. I do not want to be a consumer. I want to be a disciple.

And yet, somehow, our family needed to find a new church family. How was I supposed to do that?

I wondered if it is possible that this could be a spiritually formative experience rather than a consumeristic experience.

Our family came together and prayed about the decision. We focused on three key attributes we wanted in a church: community, mission and Scripture.

We wanted to find a church where we could have spiritual friendships. We wanted a church where we could participate in the mission of God. We wanted a place where we could grow in God's word. With this focus, we set out on our journey and began to visit 13 different churches.

Here is what we experienced:

**1. We noticed** that church auditoriums are often very cold, so bring a sweater with you.

**2. We learned** that meeting new people weekly is tiring.

**3. We observed** that COVID-19 has taken the wind out of many churches' sails, yet they continue to keep going in hope.

**4. We found** friendliness regularly as we entered church buildings, with people often smiling and offering a welcome when they did not recognize us.

**5. We remembered** the impact of someone taking us out to lunch after worship and how special that is.

**6. We discovered** the joy of receiving mail as handwritten notes were sent to us to thank us for coming to worship.

**7. We felt** important as we were asked to stand and introduce ourselves or were mentioned from the pulpit.

**8. We recalled** how confusing it can be for a guest to know which door to enter, where to go and what to do.

**9. We underwent** a little embarrassment as one lady suggested that my wife and I should attend the college/young adults' class (actually, that made me feel good).

**10. We identified** with the feeling of being "new" and how awkward, frustrating and challenging that can be.

**11. We were encouraged** when we were invited to attend Bible studies and small groups outside of the assembly. It's nice to be invited!

**12. We appreciated** churches that had food — dinner for the youth group, ice cream social after worship or a small group potluck. Something about food just makes you feel welcome.

**13. We experienced** sadness when we realized that we cannot go to all of the churches we visited, but we must pick one.

Finding a church home is not for the faint of heart. But as I told my children, this is a moment where we get to see many churches and meet many different brothers and sisters.

So instead of viewing this as a chore, maybe this can be a practice of drawing closer to God through the church. We are nearing the end of our search. While it has been challenging (and I am ready for it to be over), I am thankful for this season where we could step back and see the church as guests and be thankful for the universal body of Christ of which we are a part.

**STEVE CLOER** is assistant professor of ministry at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn. He teaches courses in congregational ministry, mission and leadership and directs the Doctor of Ministry program. Previously, he was the preacher for the Southside Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas.

## Views



Steve Cloer

'Brenton' by Rick Gibson and W. Keith Brenton



See more by following [brenton.daily](#) on Facebook and Instagram.

## FROM OUR READERS

# Personal column resonates

Thank you so much for your powerfully written opinion article. (Views: "Sex abuse victim: 'I thought what happened was my fault,'" Page 32, September.)

I've subscribed to *The Christian Chronicle* for 20-plus years, but I've never before been moved to write a response. My daughter and I had a wonderfully frank discussion precipitated by your story.

Though I can imagine that it was painful to write and to share, please know that making your story heard has made a difference in our lives.

**BRAD DENTON** | Atlanta

As a father and father-in-law of millennials and zoomers, I can report with confidence that those generations (generalizing here) are very interested in learning about God. (Editorial: "How Churches of Christ can grow again," Page 30, September.)

The subject of "God" is what

first attracts people from those generations to "church." When they show up at a Church of Christ, they are disappointed to observe an exaggerated focus on doctrine and a lack of interest in studying about God.

**NEIL SHORT** | Safford, Ariz.

Thank you for your thoughtful essay on Sunday night "make-up round" communion for those who were unable to take part on Sunday morning (Page 38, September).

I have always strongly objected to having other people watch me or anyone else take communion. I think we have a rather unbiblical approach to communion that is more a tradition than a sacrament.

The Bible, as far as I have ever been able to discern, never had people watch other people take communion. If this means partaking twice on Sunday, so much the better.

**JULIA DENTON** | Dumfries, Va.

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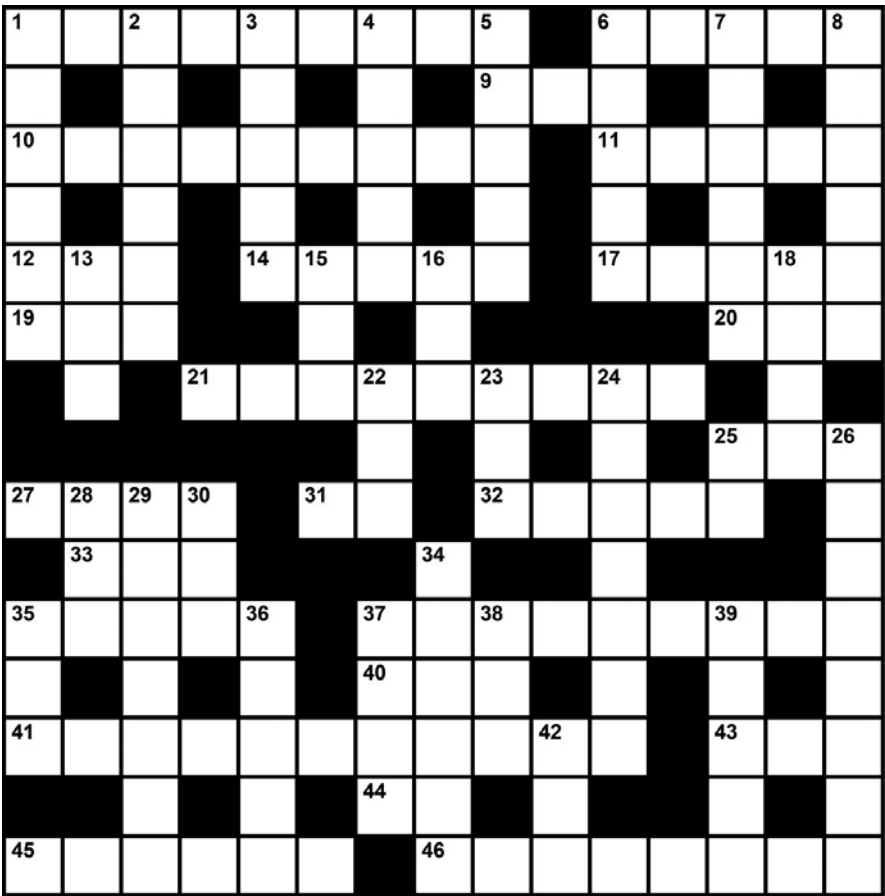


# The Christian Chronicle Crossword

By Myles Mellor | [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

## ACROSS

1. "The \_\_\_\_ love of the Lord never ceases" (Lamentations 3:22, English Standard Version).
6. "Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose \_\_\_\_" (2 Corinthians 4:1, ESV).
9. \_\_\_\_ rule (usually).
10. "I will uphold you with my \_\_\_\_ right hand" (Isaiah 41:10, ESV).
11. "... casting all your anxieties on him, because he \_\_\_\_ for you" (1 Peter 5:7, ESV).
12. Compass direction, abbr.
14. Searches for the truth.
17. "Only the wise know what things really mean. Wisdom makes them \_\_\_\_ and makes their frowns disappear" (Ecclesiastes 8:1, Good News Translation).
19. Heating fuel.
20. Acted.
21. "To honor the Lord is to hate evil: I hate pride and \_\_\_\_, evil ways and false words" (Proverbs 8:13, GNT)
25. Short time period, for short.
27. "May God, the source of \_\_\_\_, fill you with all joy and peace" (Romans 15:13, GNT).
31. Approve.
32. "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of \_\_\_\_ rises" (Matthew 13:33, GNT).
33. Every river has one.
35. "If God is \_\_\_\_, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31, GNT, two words).
37. "God let Hezekiah go his own way only in order to test his \_\_\_\_" (2 Chronicles 32:31).
40. Goal.
41. "\_\_\_\_ hath no man than this,



- that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, King James Version, two words).
43. Land of the brave and free
44. Scale note.
45. Lengthen.
46. "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are \_\_\_\_" (Mark 10:27, KJV).
- like \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 40:31, ESV).
3. Fruits in the Bible.
4. "O come let us \_\_\_\_ him!"
5. Duties.
6. Cab drivers.
7. "... the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be \_\_\_\_?" (Psalm 27:1, KJV).
8. God \_\_\_\_ Abraham by telling him to sacrifice his son.
13. Short sleep.
15. Make a goof
16. Powder \_\_\_\_.
18. Green fruit.
22. Large tree.
1. "Be \_\_\_\_ and courageous" (Deuteronomy 31:6, ESV).
2. "... they shall mount up with wings

## DOWN

## BIBLE BOWLING

### Scriptural geography

**MOUNTAIN, RIVER, LAKE OR SEA?** Identify each of the following:

1. Adriatic.
2. Aegean.
3. Arnon.
4. Bitter.
5. Carmel.
6. Euxine.
7. Gerizim.
8. Hermon.
9. Jabbock.
10. Olympus.

Answers to the following all begin with E:

11. A way-out book.
12. Found before Nehemiah.
13. Father of the Edomites.
14. Met Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.
15. Mother of Seth.
16. Where David spared Saul.

Quiz by Steve Whitehead of the British Bible School, [britishbibleschool.com](http://britishbibleschool.com).

**ANSWERS**, crossword solution on Page 34.

23. Include.
24. "Be of good \_\_\_\_, and he shall strengthen your heart" (Psalm 31:24, KJV).
25. Quiet!
26. "The official ordered the \_\_\_\_ to stop, and both Philip and the official went down into the water and Philip baptized him" (Acts 8:38, GNT).
28. Or best offer, for short.
29. "Be ye therefore \_\_\_\_, even as your Father which is in heaven is \_\_\_\_" (Matthew 5:48, KJV).
30. College email address ending.
34. Apostle who preached in Greece, Syria and Phrygia.
35. Sweet fruit.
36. One who tempted Eve.
37. Transport.
38. I love, in Latin.
39. Hand digit.
42. "A donde \_\_\_\_?" (Spanish).



# Word Find: The gospel of Luke

By Betty Hollister | The Christian Chronicle

BETHLEHEMARYAEUGOGANYSLAWFULDDNIKNAMUANREPACAPRORMNGORMOORGEDIRBORMPIRRREIEESIRAHPPARABLEIEETEESSELISTENINGIALVDP LATJSNHDISEASESSTEERT EREEELEIOTYBTIIHCAGOGU SENCPRAMPMPYPHNHTLYAFYRSDTTAONMISRAGLOEIFSDTESYEERIAHDEIEIRDGLOSEISULRDGHCEHRSFSJSLNPESREINERARHAACILEGNAEIMSOLREIRAGIHFULLYRUJNIYEHI EVBRUACATCHTERAZANRLTTBATASEELILAGNIZITPABUNIELIZABETHSUTNADNETTAE THEOPHILUSSSNOITARENEG

Find the following words from the Gospel of Luke. The unused 32 letters form a statement about the purpose of the book. (Find the answer on Page 34.)

- |              |               |             |              |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| • ABRAHAM    | • COLLECTORS  | • HEAVENLY  | • PRAISING   |
| • ANGELIC    | • DISEASES    | • HUMILITY  | • REJECTED   |
| • ANNAS      | • EDGES       | • INJURY    | • REVEALED   |
| • APPEARED   | • ELIZABETH   | • ISAIAH    | • SABBATH    |
| • ATTENDANT  | • ENEMIES     | • LAUGHED   | • SCRIPTURES |
| • AUTHORITY  | • ENTER       | • LAWFUL    | • SYNAGOGUE  |
| • BAPTIZING  | • EYESIGHT    | • LISTENING | • TEMPLE     |
| • BARREN     | • FREEDOM     | • LYING     | • TETRARCH   |
| • BETHLEHEM  | • FULLY       | • MANKIND   | • THEOPHILUS |
| • BLAMELESS  | • GABRIEL     | • MARY      | • TIBERIUS   |
| • BLESSED    | • GALILEE     | • MESSAGE   | • VIRGIN     |
| • BRIDEGROOM | • GENERATIONS | • NAZARETH  | • WORSHIPS   |
| • CAPERNAUM  | • GENTILES    | • PARABLE   | • WRITTEN    |
| • CATCH      | • GRAPES      | • PHARISEE  | • ZECHARIAH  |

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# Science vs. scripture? It doesn't have to be that way, biology prof writes

**W**hat do you do with a biology professor who doesn't "believe in science?"

Just ask Janet Kellogg Ray, an adjunct biology professor at the University of North Texas, a graduate of Abilene Christian University and a member of The Branch, a Church of Christ in the Dallas suburb of Carrollton.

"There are many things I believe, but science is not one of them," Ray says. "Instead, I accept science evidence. After all, a fact is true whether I believe it or not."

Her book, **"Baby Dinosaurs on the Ark?"** is not a theological treatise. It is written from the perspective of a Christian educator who wants to ensure that the next generation of our youth will be able to

avoid the unnecessary polarization of science and Christianity.

Ray discusses the nature of science, what it can and cannot do, and how it works. She discusses the 19th century work of Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis as he laid the foundations for what we call germ theory.

She contrasts science with advocacy of the law by attorneys in the courtroom and shows that the goal of science is not winning, but rather truth-seeking. And she discusses why trying to use Darwin's original writings to answer questions totally beyond the scope of knowledge in his day — think DNA — is laughable.

If you have never considered the existence of positions other than the polar extremes of atheistic naturalism and young earth creationism, Ray provides a brief introduction to positions that search for common ground where science

and Scripture can work together.

The sad reality is that we often push our young people into the belief that only the polarized extremes exist, without ever suggesting that one can be both a scientist and a Christian.

The last half of the book is where the author really gets humming. She describes the evidence and explains the simplicity of a scientific narrative versus the contortions of fitting the facts into the young earth creationist narrative. She addresses the age of the earth, flood

geology and the Grand Canyon, the fossil record, the "missing link," intelligent design and human evolution in light of our understanding of DNA.

In each of these areas, she provides balanced research, citing materials from Answers in Genesis

as well as a variety of other Christian perspectives. She demonstrates clearly that she, as well as many others, believes the Bible and also accepts the findings of modern science.

As a science educator, Ray is unwilling to dismiss or ignore the ever-growing evidence of science. As a Christian, she is committed to her faith in Jesus Christ.

She briefly shares her life story, tells of the struggle to find a position that is true to both her faith and her vocation, and seeks to share with young people the possibility of being a true Christian scientist.

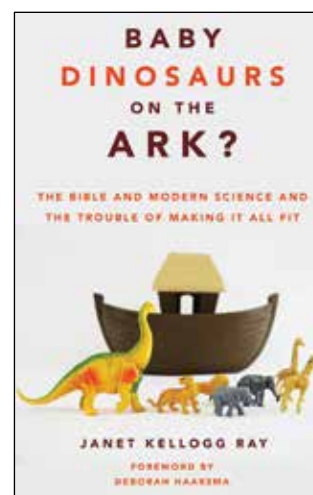
If you have teen children in your home, you should read this with an open mind, looking for ways to help them be faithful in adulthood.

**LEN FEUERHELM** is a professor emeritus of physics at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City and dean of missions for the Wilshire Church of Christ.

## In Print



Len Feuerhelm



Janet Kellogg Ray. **Baby Dinosaurs on the Ark? The Bible and Modern Science and the Trouble of Making It All Fit.** William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021. 227 pgs, \$17.99.



# COVID-19 Checklist

What is your congregation doing to protect your members?

- ☒ Follow mandated restrictions
- ☒ Wear masks
- ☒ Social distance
- ☒ Use prefilled communion sets
- ☒ Encourage use of hand sanitizers
- ☒ Leadership set examples
- ☒ Clean touched surfaces
- ☐ Use The Paperless Hymnal

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**Fenton Church of Christ**, 212 Main St, PO Box 191, Fenton, MO, (636) 326-1440, [letscook3232@sbcglobal.net](mailto:letscook3232@sbcglobal.net).

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See [christianchronicle.org/advertise](http://christianchronicle.org/advertise) to place your classified ad.

## Christianity —Why I Believe What I Believe

by Ed Nill

What did **Martin Luther** really say about baptism and faith? Ed Nill, who speaks German, has researched "**Luther's Works**" and tells us how Luther actually defined baptism and its relationship to faith. The German word for baptism is "Taufe" and means – immersion. Also, did you know that for hundreds of years the idea of inheriting sin did not exist? When and why did infant baptism become popular? And when did the sinner's prayer concept begin, and what did the prayer supposedly replace in regard to Christian doctrine? The author's writing style does not accuse or abuse the reader! **When ordering the book, if you want additional information on Luther's view on baptism, use comment section on the order form. We'll email a PDF copy at no charge.**

See [www.bosspublishing.org](http://www.bosspublishing.org) for table of contents and narrative description of the book. Single copy cost with shipping is \$20.00. **With multiple copies 15% discount is available.**



## CHRISTIANITY

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## My work here began with 9/11; it taught me to seek out the light

Twenty years ago I was driving to work on the Tuesday before my first Friday deadline as a reporter for *The Christian Chronicle*.

The song on K-LOVE had something to do with prayer. As it ended, the deejay said, "And prayer is what we need right now because we're being told that a second plane has hit the World Trade Center."

Our offices were in the Bible building at Oklahoma Christian University back then. I still had a bunch of files on my desk from my predecessor, Glover Shipp, who had just retired.

Our editors — Bailey McBride, Scott LaMascus and Lindy Adams — and I tried to get a handle on what was happening and how it would change our plans for the October 2001 issue. Virginia Ware, our administrative assistant, worried about her daughter, who was in Austria on OC's study abroad program.

"I can't believe I'm saying this," I told Virginia, "but she may be safer than we are now." Then Vicki Wallace, the Bible department secretary, rushed in and said, "They hit the Pentagon!"

I didn't know who "they" were. My immediate concern was our fellowship. I called the Manhattan Church of Christ in New York and talked to minister Tom Robinson about the congregation's response.

I talked to Joe Dudney of Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in Tennessee, which sent trucks of supplies to the Springfield Gardens Church of Christ in Jamaica, N.Y. I got reaction from our brothers and sisters around the world, including Croatian minister Mladen Jovanovic.

"Where are the limits of human hatred?" Jovanovic asked. "We pray for all who are suffering in your beautiful country."

I learned that members of the Stonycreek Church of Christ in Shanksville, Pa., made sandwiches for the crews investigating the crash of United Flight 93. One of the passengers, 38-year-old Thomas Burnett Jr., was a 1992 graduate of Pepperdine University in California. He called his wife from the plane and said he and

other passengers were going to try to stop the hijackers. They did.

A lifetime, it seems, has passed since I wrote that story. I got

involved in singles ministry at the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. There I met a beautiful young woman from Altus, Okla. We got married, and she became a doctor. We had two babies, both girls. The oldest is a teenager now.

I traveled to some 75 countries and territories around the world to report about

what God's doing among us. I wrote about water wells, World Bible School, mission hospitals and refugees. I wrote about dedicated Christ followers who went on to their reward — including Glover Shipp, Joe Dudney and Mladen Jovanovic.

I'm so thankful to Oklahoma Christian for adopting the *Chronicle* 40 years ago. Thank you for making me a part of your family ... our family.

This newspaper, this ministry, has shaped my life in so many ways. It has opened my eyes to see that our Father is at work, even on dark days.

Two decades after that darkest of days, I know who "they" are, the terrorists who changed our world.

On a recent Sunday, as I sat at our usual spot in the church pew, I got a notification on my phone. The Taliban had retaken Afghanistan.

My heart sank. I thought about all the brave men and women in our military I'd talked to through the years and the sacrifices they made.

Was it all for nothing?

Then I thought about a man named Muhammad, an Afghan refugee I met in Athens, Greece, about three years ago. He's a Christian now and a gifted preacher.

"I have many friends who are believers," he told me. And each is a miracle. "I believe God can do more."

So do I. My work here began with 9/11. Living in its shadow has taught me to seek out the light.

### Insight



Erik Tryggstad

### Crossword | From Page 30



### Bible Bowling | From Page 31

- 1) Sea (Acts 27:27).
- 2) Sea.
- 3) River (Numbers 21:24).
- 4) Lake (Exodus 15).
- 5) Mountain (1 Kings 18:20).
- 6) Sea (Black Sea).
- 7) Mountain (Deuteronomy 11:29).
- 8) Mountain (Joshua 12:1).
- 9) River (Genesis 32).
- 10) Mountain.
- 11) Exodus.
- 12) Ezra.
- 13) Esau.
- 14) Elijah.
- 15) Eve.
- 16) En Gedi.

### Word Search | From Page 31

The unused 32 letters read: "AN ORDERLY BIOGRAPHY FOR LIFE OF JESUS."

**ERIK TRYGGSTAD** is president and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [erik@christianchronicle.org](mailto:erik@christianchronicle.org), and follow him on Twitter @eriktryggstad.



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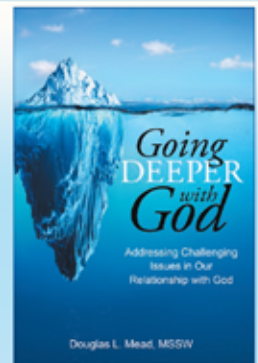
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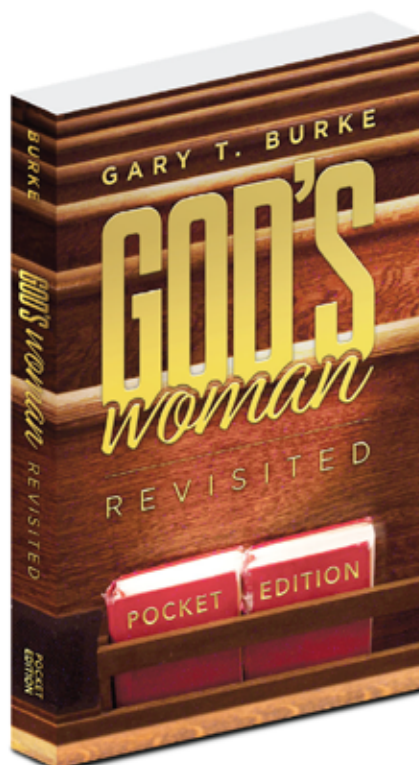
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