My Dear Lakeland Family,

You are holding a treasure as you take up this prayer guide. I say it is a treasure for several reasons.

First, this guide is a record of a few of the moments when God has touched the people and ministries of Lakeland. Many times, we read the Bible and hear of what God has done long ago, in distant places. But each of the 30 devotions captured here include accounts of God touching the lives of Lakeland people through this church. You will be blessed as you read them, and emboldened to trust Him for the future.

Each devotional also includes related Scripture. We value meditating on Scripture so highly at Lakeland because God promises that by meditating upon His Word, day and night, we will be made stable, thriving, and fruitful people, regardless of our life-circumstances (Psalm 1). I encourage you not to read each passage only once, but to keep the verse with you throughout the day and return to it 10-15 times. It will only take a moment, but it will inject a remembrance of God into your day that will bring great blessing.

Third, each devotion includes a prayer. There is great value in voicing one another’s prayers because we each script our prayers differently, and so are helped to pray in the fresh voice of one another’s devotion.

Mostly, though, this prayer guide is part of the adventure of our 30/30 Vision, a season in which we are asking God to bring great transformation to our own hearts and lives as we move forward with Him to exalt Christ for generations to come. It is a season of sanctification that will position us, in humility, beneath Him Who wants to make us “a light for the nations, that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (Is 49:6)

My dear brothers and sisters, this is our time to run hard after God! Let’s walk in radical dependence and watchfulness as we give ourselves wholly to Him!

Walking with you,

Dan Weyerhaeuser
Senior Pastor
Back in October of 2000, Pastor Dan Weyerhaeuser traveled from Gurnee, Illinois to my home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dan spent a couple of nights in my home. I was amazed that a pastor of a church would show so much personal care for someone. That was the beginning of the Lord’s calling me to be a youth pastor at Lakeland Church.

The Lakeland Body officially called me in December of 2000. My young family and I moved to Illinois in March of 2001 and we began ministering full time with Lakeland. I served full time in the youth ministry until February of 2005 and then part time as an Associate Pastor until August of 2006.

As sweet as those days of pastoral staff ministry with Lakeland were, it is amazing to me that since the Lord called me into full time service with the Lake County Health Department (Child and Family Connections) in February of 2005, He has shown me even sweeter days of fellowship with the Body of Christ.

I have the blessing of serving alongside Lakeland’s Elders, having recently entered my third (two year) term with this great band of Brothers. I also have the privilege of seeing my wife on staff at Lakeland, serving as a support to the office staff. Our children are enjoying the blessing of Lakeland’s Children’s Ministries, where my wife and I also serve. We are grateful to the Lord for His care for us through the Body and ministry of Lakeland Church.

It is amazing to me that the Lord brought us to Lakeland for some very specific purposes. But it is also amazing that the Lord knows even bigger and longer term goals that He has for us, as He unfolds His leading for each of us, day by day.

**PRAYER**

Lord, the path You have for us might be uncertain, but in Your hands, we know that the path is good. Thank you for blessing us along the path of our lives with goodness and joy.
I spent a lot of my Christian life knowing prayer was important, but every time I heard “prayer meeting” or “prayer service,” I cringed a bit and thought, “boring.” The problem was more with me than any prayer gathering I went to. God has been patiently teaching me a lot through Lakeland saints who pray.

A number of years ago, a young father from among us was diagnosed with leukemia and went to Seattle for treatment that included a bone marrow transplant. His condition deteriorated until one afternoon we received word he was not expected to survive much longer. There was an immediate burden to pray and a quick, almost spontaneous, prayer meeting took place that evening.

The prayers of my brothers and sisters in Christ were heartfelt and urgent. They praised the Lord and thanked Him for His abundant kindness. We pleaded with the Lord for His mercy on this young man. We submitted ourselves to the good will of the Lord, wherever that may lead. From every corner of the room, as soon as one person ended, another took up the plea.

I was overwhelmed. I slipped out of my chair and fell on my knees. I wanted to lay face down on the floor. The room was a holy, holy place, sanctified by God’s Spirit present in His people who spoke intimately with their Father. I was blessed to be there.

Quickly, the word came from the doctors in Seattle that John had turned back from death. He was improving and was going to live. The medical staff was astonished and had no explanation for this change. How good is our God and how sacred the privilege to pray.

“Again, I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”

MATTHEW 18:19-20

PRAYER Father, You are all knowing, all powerful and merciful beyond what I can comprehend. Thank You for the healing You have given and for the many ways You have demonstrated Your care over what concerns me. Draw me to You in prayer with a trusting heart and a yielded spirit.
I grew up going to Lakeland. I remember being in Children’s Sunday School, having watered-down apple juice and animal crackers. I remember loving the Blair’s class. I was in Accepted when it was still a part of Crossing and I graduated from Crossing this past spring. Lakeland is part of who I am.

In many ways, it has been a physical example to me of God and how He never changes or disappears.

While I’ve grown up and gone through so much, Lakeland has been a constant in my life. God’s people at Lakeland were faithful, showing the love of Jesus even when I may not have always loved back.

Yes, some of the people have come and gone. But others have stayed the same. I’ve grown up, but Lakeland is still there, just like God is always there and never leaves us. Lots of things can change in your life, but I feel so blessed to have been able to grow up at the same church my entire life.

A lot of things change in life. You gain friends; you lose friends. You start an activity, then it ends. Through it all, the one thing that lasts forever is God and His church. You have good days and bad days. One day we smile at the grocery store clerk and congratulate the team that just beat us. Then we have days where we get impatient and don’t have time for other people. Through it all, God’s love remains constant. He is still with us on our bad days, continuing to help us grow. When we give control of our lives to him, He will help us to love others. He is faithful to love us and draw us into a relationship with Him.

PRAYER Lord, thank You for your eternal presence in our lives. Thank You that no matter what changes in our life, You are always there for us. You remain the same, forever. Forgive us for the times when we aren’t faithful to You. Thank You for loving us, even on our bad days. Help us to live our lives for You. Thank You for this church that has been example of your love. Continue to fill us with Your love so that we can love others the way You want us to. Help us to always share Your love and faithfulness.

“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

PSALM 100:5
The Lord has a plan. It was four years ago that I first drove past Lakeland. I did not think much of it. I did not know that a year from then I would be attending the senior high youth group. I did not know that three years from then I would be working with the junior high youth group. I did not know that four years from then I would be attending Sunday morning services at Lakeland. But God did. He had a plan for me, a plan that would bring me closer to Him.

God used Lakeland tremendously in my life. Through Lakeland, I was able to get into a meaningful discipleship relationship with Jeff Ballard. In the time I spent with Jeff, he showed me who God really was and how much He loved me. That relationship started me down a long and hard road of forgiveness and healing that I am still on today. Without that relationship, I would not be walking with God as closely as I am now. Without Lakeland, I would not be walking as close to the Lord as I am now.

So often there are times where God seems so far away. There are times where you have no idea how to go on. Christian, remember God holds your hand. He is right there with you. Life sometimes crashes in on us. Sometimes we get betrayed, sometimes we do not have the money to pay the bills, sometimes loved ones die. When this happens, know He is right there with you. He is holding your hand. He is the one who tells you not to fear. He is the one who helps you.

Christian, when tough times come, hold His hand, when life weighs you down hold His hand tighter, and when the world crashes in, grasp His hand so tight that nothing can pull your hands apart. What does it mean that God has your hand? What are areas in your life where God seems distant? Do you trust that the ‘rope’ and ‘harness’ will hold you? If not, talk to Him about that.

PRAYER Father, You know the things I’ve been through, the things I’m going through, and the things I will go through. Help me to trust You even when it feels impossible to do so. Help me to feel Your hand holding me. Thank You for the love You have for me.
My first encounter with Lakeland actually happened at a lake in northern Michigan at Center Lake Bible Camp. Dan was the speaker for the week and had brought several students along. One afternoon, Brad was canoeing when the canoe tipped and immediately Brad’s eyeglasses fell into the muck at the bottom of the lake. There was a scramble, but no one could find Brad’s glasses.

Brad insisted the search continue. So one of the lifeguards swam out to the spot where the canoe flipped over, about 80 yards from shore. While the lifeguard swam, Brad asked his friends to join him in prayer.

I have fallen into that lake and know what it is like. It is stained with peat and tastes like bad, iron filled well water. The bottom, where Brad’s glasses would surely be preserved for a thousand years, was like cold, stiff, split pea soup, which, if you stepped in it, and your foot was not instantly repelled by feeling the stuff, you would be repelled by the well-founded fear that there was no bottom to that otherworldly muck. I did not believe Brad would ever see those glasses again.

As the lifeguard dove down, I believed even less that the prayers being uttered would be answered with a “yes.” Waiting is especially hard when you know the waiting will end badly.

Ten seconds passed, and rather than seeing the mop head of the lifeguard come out of the water, we saw a blackened, dripping limb burst out of the water, his filthy arm and clay-filled hand uncovered Brad’s glasses. What was lost was found. We were amazed and we rejoiced.

“What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountain and go and search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine, which have not gone astray. Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in Heaven that one of these little ones perish.”

MATTHEW 18:12-14

PRAYER

God, help me to have a believing heart that You will bring us what we are praying for, both for our financial needs, but more importantly, for the safe return to the kingdom for those precious souls that are lost.
It was a cold February morning as I drove into the McDonald's parking lot. The snow was lightly falling and it was dark. Even though it was a struggle to wake up and get there, I saw my friend Bill sitting in his usual spot with his Bible open and I knew I had made the right choice to come. I’m not a big fan of Woody Allen, but I think he stated it well when he said, "80 percent of success is just showing up".

Over the past few years, I have the opportunity to meet with Lakeland men for fellowship, study, and prayer. Although it is sometimes a struggle to make these morning times with my brothers, I have learned that half the battle is just “showing up,” and I always leave feeling refreshed and ready to face the day.

Men and women both deal with certain issues that are best discussed with those who can relate. Our time together, through prayer and reading of the Word, gives us the chance to know we are not alone in our struggles and downfalls as men. We pray for our wives, our children our workplace. It is good to know that, as you walk through your day, there is another who is interceding for you who can relate with your situation.

This time allows me focus my thoughts and energy on what is important. I am also learning the important skill of communicating with other men on topics other than sports or the latest model of car. It is a communication that is fostered by our common bond in Christ. Don’t get me wrong; we talk about cars and sports too! These weekly meetings have lead to my growth and I recommend it to all men at Lakeland.

PRAYER

LORD, thank You for my brothers at Lakeland. I pray You will continue to grow us closer through Your Spirit and that our times together will result in an impacting change for Your Kingdom.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

PROVERBS 27:17
Recently, I started a study of Isaiah and was immediately humbled by Isaiah 1:3, “The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” I was there before coming to Lakeland in September of 1987; I did not understand who God was -- at all.

John and I were invited to Lakeland by one of his co-workers. After our first visit, I declared I was not going to go again. It was too difficult, too humbling. The Lord, though, was working in John’s heart and John persevered and brought us every week. And I am thrilled to say we gave our lives and hearts to Jesus in December of that year.

We have had a lot to learn and we are grateful for God’s perfect love and unending mercy, the faithful, godly leadership at Lakeland, and the fellowship of the body.

Fast forward to 2009: John and I began hosting the Alpha course last September with Scott and Mary Jo Pihlaja and then with Dan and Elizabeth Olson. We have been able to watch, first-hand, the miracle of God changing hearts and minds and lives. We have listened as grown women cried as they realized Jesus is not just an idea, but He is real. He loves them, and He died for them.

As Pastor Dan said recently, we live in a county with 640,000 unchurched people who “do not know, who do not understand.” It is my prayer that through the ministry of Lakeland Church today, and in the years to come, many people (like me) will come to know and understand who God is.

"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

JOHN 3:16-17

PRAYER

God, thank You for drawing me to You. Would You please do the same for so many souls in our county who have never known Your love for them in a very special and saving way.
A few years back, I had the opportunity to sign up for a Beth Moore study at Lakeland. This particular study was entitled, “Believing God” and was designed to encourage the participant to look for ways to increase our faith.

I was thoroughly enjoying the study one week when I was given an opportunity to test my believing skills. I was rushing out the door to get my son, Jonathan, to school on time. On the way, I discovered Jonathan hadn’t had any breakfast that morning.

His hunger became a more enthusiastic negotiation the closer we got to school. As a mother, I was experiencing the internal battle we women tend to have with ourselves. Then, a new thought whispered to my worried mind. “Ask me.” It wasn’t an audible voice, but I heard it. I needed to trust and believe that God, who loves me and loves my son, was going to give us an opportunity to trust Him in this. Somewhat weakly, I tried this suggestion out on Jonathan.

All negotiating stopped as we pulled into the school parking lot, just in time to not be late. The school day finally ended and when I saw the look on my son’s face as he walked out to the car, I knew God showed up. “I walked into class and Mrs. Bennett had a box of donuts on her desk,” he said. “And she had those little goldfish crackers.”

I thanked God in the very deep places of my heart that He prompted, through His still small voice, an opportunity for the faith of my heart and my son’s heart to grow. I thanked Him for Beth Moore and her Bible study that had me thinking of ways to believe Him. And I thanked Him for Lakeland, a praying church that offered me the opportunity to grow in my faith through a Bible study offered to those of us who wanted to believe God just a little more.

PRAYER

Father God, sometimes we walk by too fast, sometimes we are not thinking on the things of You and miss the opportunity to believe You. Today, help us have Your eyes to see and Your ears to hear ways in which we can step out in faith and believe You. Make us like Jesus as we trust You. We believe You; help us overcome our unbelief.
Mentoring has been a huge blessing in my life through Lakeland. Jonathan Rund, as my employer, mentored me through a couple informal conversations when I was a new seminary student in the Lake County area. He took a genuine interest in my life and offered wisdom as I was seeking a church home. And he continues to be a godly, wise mentor in my life.

Within my first year of being at Lakeland, I got connected with Carl Brown. I asked him to mentor me, which led to an amazing two years of personal growth. His life, alone, taught me wisdom in how to follow Jesus with my life. I still hold on to the many things he taught me.

As followers of Jesus, there is a call to both be mentored and to mentor others. A ‘disciple’ is literally a follower/learner who focuses their life to become like the one they are following/learning from. Throughout the Scriptures, there is a call to raise up the ‘next generation’ so they, too, might put their trust in the Lord and continue living for the Kingdom of God.

‘...be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus’ Take a moment to remember the grace you have received through Jesus.

‘...what you have heard from me’ Who are the mentors in your life? What areas in your life do you need to take a ‘next step’ in following Jesus? Prayerfully ask the Lord to bring mentors into your life for these areas.

‘...entrust to faithful men (women) who will be able to teach others also’ Who are you mentoring with your life? If no one comes to your mind, spend some time in prayer making yourself available to Jesus in this way and praying for an opportunity to be a mentor in someone’s life.

PRAYER  Lord Jesus, thank you again for Your grace in my life! Give me the grace I need to continue to follow You for the rest of my life! And give me the grace to pour my life into others that they, too, may trust You and follow You all the days of their life! Thank You for Your Church!
In January 1994, our first daughter was born, but a low bilirubin level caused us to return to the hospital daily to have blood drawn (a painful experience for both newborns and the first time parents). We called the church office and asked that the elders pray as we were sent back to the hospital, possibly to have our little daughter re-admitted.

We were surprised when Ross Wagner, a former assistant pastor, showed up in the waiting room. It was such a comfort to know we were not alone. Ross helped us in our weakness as we waited, not knowing the test results or what would happen next. We felt weak, unsure, and a little scared. Ross’ prayer was a model of how to pray when you aren’t sure, but you trust the Lord. What a comfort to have Ross be with us during that challenging time in our lives.

Ross’ model of coming to pray with a person, actually holding their hand, and being there even if you don’t understand what you should pray made a big impact on me. Romans 8:26 encourages us to trust God even if we aren’t sure what to pray. It is a lot different to have someone reach out and touch you, give you a hug, and admit to God there is a need they do not understand, but trust God can help through prayer.

When you have a need, I trust you will take the opportunity to bring others into your situation and allow them the privilege of coming to your home, stopping at your hospital room, or coming to see you at work in order to pray.

**PRAYER**

Lord, use people to reach out and bring Your peace. You know we have needs and gave us the Holy Spirit so we can sense when someone needs a phone call, hug, or email. Help us to see the needs of others around us, take a chance by asking these people how we can help them, and really pray, knowing that You are the source of all help.
In the northeast corner of my backyard, I have built a garden berm with Rose of Sharon bushes, red twig dogwoods, yucca plants, and an ash tree. There is a garden bench at the base of the tree that I use for meditation and “cloud carving” on lazy summer afternoons. I like it there. So does Dan Chesman.

I will often find Dan sitting on that bench in the corner of my yard, in the shade of the ash tree, praying for me and my family. He does this on his own as he is led by the Holy Spirit. Dan is invited and he has my “permission” to make himself at home there. Who would not grant him such entry? Sometimes I join him. Most times not.

Dan is a Lakeland prayer warrior, not by title, but by action. He has been known to pray for the terminally ill, parked in the driveways of homes. After the first service on Sundays, Dan and his bride, Beth, and others, may slip into a church office and spend the second service in prayer for the church and the pastors preaching.

Dan’s life has been altered for the best by the Word of God and by the people who attend Lakeland Church. Dan now alters other people’s lives by praying for them.

I am startled at times when I grab a cup of morning coffee and open the window shades to see this person in my yard. Then I realize two things: I am being prayed for right now, and Dan is being obedient to the Lord while sitting on my garden bench.

**PRAYER**

Lord, thank You for the prayers of the saints. Thank You for directing me to pray for others and for others to pray for me. My family and I, and Lakeland, need You Lord. Help us to submit to Your leading which is always true and good, and a blessing for myself and others.
Something that I find never fails to spur me on towards greater joy and commitment is the occasional word of encouragement. It doesn’t need to be eloquent or well-said, and can even be as simple as a “thank you for sharing about that today.” In any case, a word of affirmation always fills my heart with joy.

Crossing has a great custom of writing “blessings.” At the end of each retreat, the students pass around their folders in small groups and everyone writes a word of encouragement to each of their peers. These “blessings” have been a source of incredible joy to me, both in writing and receiving them. Lakeland is filled with scores of faithful and loving servants who devote their time and energy every week toward serving the Lord. Stop for a moment and consider how you have been blessed over the years by your brothers and sisters in this congregation. Let those people know you appreciate their loving service!

Imagine for a moment some apples of gold in settings of silver. This might seem an odd picture to you, but consider how a fitting word (an apple of gold) can take a good circumstance (settings of silver) and make it exponentially more valuable. Have you been blessed by the service of others at Lakeland? What words of encouragement might you offer to those people that might bless them immensely in return?

Who is “over you in the Lord”? Have you spoken your love and esteem to them lately? Stop right now and write a note of encouragement, or pick up the phone and call someone who has blessed you recently. You do not need to wait for “Pastor Appreciation Month,” and “Nursery Worker Appreciation Month” doesn’t even exist. Today is the perfect day to speak some gold into someone’s life!

A habit can be formed in as little as 10 days—assuming that you’ve encouraged others today, you need to keep it up at least 9 more days. Ask God to work in your life and change you into a person who is always giving thanks, both to Him and to those who serve Him.

PRAYER Lord, there are so many people doing Your work at Lakeland. Help me to understand the value of their work better. Also, please help me to thank Your fellow servants for their holy work.
Over the years, we have been blessed by Lakeland in many ways and through various people. The first recollection of that was how God led us, 22 years ago, to the property where we live today. We were not believers at the time, but the weekend we moved in, the Crockett’s moved in next door. Several months later, we were saved at a church in Fox River Grove. One year later, the Buescher’s, who attended Lakeland for many years, moved in on the other side of us. We were blessed to have two neighbors who attended Lakeland mentor us over the years, and still do today.

For several years, we attended Full Gospel Tabernacle where Pastor Charles and Marie Hofflander blessed us through their ministry to the Lord. Now they fellowship with us at Lakeland, and once again we are blessed through the body of believers at Lakeland. During the years of our boys growing up, we count it a privilege to have had Pastor Dan Weyerhaeuser as the youth pastor for them. He poured into their lives fun, love, truths of God, and a living faith, which was real and contagious. Our gratitude is overwhelming.

Our hearts are full of praise and gratitude to the Lord for the days in which the body of Lakeland covered us with prayer and care during the months and days in which my mom and sister left this earth, within 2 weeks of each other in 2006. Those days were hard on many levels, but Lakeland surrounded us with their love and help, and ministered to us in so many sacrificial ways.

At my mom’s funeral we used the verse from 2 Timothy 1:12. We have seen God at work before now, and trust Him for our future days as we love and fellowship with believers at Lakeland. How faithful and good God is! We are blessed!

PRAYER Father, thank You for providing people who come alongside of us all along the journey. Having brothers and sisters help us along the way has truly been a joy and blessing. Help me Lord, today, to come alongside another person and walk beside them, neither racing ahead, nor lagging behind. Help me to walk in step with another person so that they might better know Your love.

“I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:12
Mary Jo has had Type I diabetes for most of the second half of her life. While she has taken extraordinary steps to care for her health during these difficult years, there have been some bumps along the way.

One particular time, she was experiencing significant fatigue and our doctor referred her to a cardiologist with a suspicion that two decades of diabetes may have finally taken its toll on her heart. The cardiologist requested a full stress test, then an angiogram. In briefing us the evening before the procedure, he asked permission to do an angioplasty to insert stints if the angiogram revealed a more severe condition.

In what we believed to be obedience to the Word, we called for the elders to pray with us the night before the procedure. We knew these men to be humble and godly and, apart from God, powerless to affect change on their own. The prayer time was comforting and we knew the Lord had visited us by having them pray.

The next morning, the procedure was done. The results were, to say the least, astonishing. Absolutely no blockage, no damage, nothing. After nearly 20 years of Type I, insulin dependent diabetes, there was no evidence of heart disease or adverse affect on her heart at all. Mary Jo returned immediately to a normal routine.

Think what you might about that, but we choose to believe that through the faithful prayers of those men, she was preserved by the Lord. She still has diabetes, so she has not been healed, but something miraculous happened that night. God’s hand was upon us and we are grateful.

**PRAYER**

Father, there is only One righteous Who can bring us our healing. Help us to obey Your Word and faithfully call upon You in our need. Keep our Elders so when they are called upon in situations like that, their prayers will be effective and will heard by You.

"Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." JAMES 5:14-16
Delighted to be on our way to Niagara Falls for a long awaited vacation, we were interrupted by a call on our cell phone. A problem had arisen from a recent surgery to our little disabled daughter Alison. She was leaking some of her spinal fluid and was being rushed by ambulance to Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago. How could we care for our little daughter being far away from her? But, the Lord had other plans for us.

Several dear sisters in the Lord from Lakeland volunteered to assist in the care giving of Alison while she stayed at Children’s. They assured us that all would be well and that we should continue on our way, leaving everything to them. Our hearts were literally melting over the goodness of the Lord and His people. To this day we aren’t sure of all who helped us.

Later, however, driving through Ann Arbor, we were suddenly facing a vehicle coming off an on-ramp, spinning out of control. A collision was inevitable. We hit the car. It rolled over and screeched into a cement median barrier. The upshot was that the other driver was mostly fine and we were mostly okay, except for bruises. We were now without a vehicle for our trip. Again we considered heading back to Illinois, but the Lord had other plans for us.

Once composed, we sensed the Lord urging us on to Niagara. We rented another van, not knowing it would not be covered due to Michigan’s “no-fault” insurance rules. Folks at Lakeland heard of our difficulties and we learned later that some dear friends had given us van rental funds. To this day we don’t even know all who contributed to our needs. We just know for certain that the care of the Lord had come down to us through the Lord’s people at Lakeland. They were His hands upon us.

O Lord, we give you great thanks for the wonderful members of Your body who reveal Your caring love in our times of need.

**PRAYER**

“If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26-27
Several years ago, our family began a fall tradition we look forward to each year: making homemade applesauce. This year, we borrowed pots from “Sandy,” a neighbor of ours. Her children play regularly with our kids and she attended Lakeland one Sunday morning last year. We were thrilled that two of her children came to know Christ through the Backyard Bible Club we hosted this past summer. The Lord has been prompting both of us to invite her to Alpha, and this seemed like the right time. After we cleaned her pots, Carrie put them in the corner of the kitchen to be returned to her the next day. She put an Alpha invitation (and a jar of applesauce) in one of them.

Later that same afternoon, Sandy’s children came over to play, as they often do on Sundays. By that time, Carrie and I were busy with our weekend around-the-house projects, and didn’t notice until dinner time that Sandy’s pots were missing. We figured one of her children had recognized them and taken them home. Assuming the Alpha invitation had been lost, we were disappointed by the missed opportunity to invite Sandy.

Several days later, Carrie received an email from Jill Payne asking if she would be attending Alpha with her friend. Confused, Carrie contacted Jill and asked what she was inquiring about. Unknown to us, the invitation had made it to Sandy’s home and she was so ready to investigate Christianity, that she contacted the church on her own and signed up for Alpha!

We are ever thankful that Lakeland keeps its ministry focus exactly where it must be: the teaching of the Word, and the proclamation and spreading of the Gospel. There are many “Sandys” whose lives have been touched over the last 30 years of Lakeland’s outreach. With God’s help, we need to prepare for the next 30 years of ministry.

Indeed, ministries such as Alpha – and Lakeland’s many other wonderful growth and outreach opportunities - allow us as, a community of Believers, to follow Christ’s command to “share Him with all people.”

**PRAYER**

Lord, there are still so many people who have yet to come to Your kingdom. Help me design my thoughts and actions in a way that continually points people to You. I pray for my neighbors and ask that You would bring them close this day.

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

**JOHN 15:5**
The one word I always associate with Lakeland is “worship.” When we first came in July of 1989, I cannot count the number of Sunday mornings I quietly wept and bathed in the presence of God during the entire worship service. Of all the things I’m thankful for, the ability to see this glory in the middle of this sometimes awful, dark, despairing place we call earth, to see this holy vision is one of the things I treasure most.

What I experienced so strongly at Lakeland, and continue to experience here, is that constant, intentional gaze upon the glory of our God as seen supremely in the face of Jesus Christ, the living, and now embodied image of the invisible God.

Our gatherings, our ministries, our lives are passionate to be God-centered and God-honoring. We seek to be a people who are completely attentive to him and his Word to us. Our desire is to have every aspect of our lives, our thoughts, our values, our feelings, and our behavior, defined and governed by the glory of God, and not by our own circumstance and the values of the world around us.

For over more than 20 years, I have found in Lakeland a people who hold an extraordinarily fine balance of both grace and truth. We value relationships of humility, unity, and integrity. While not perfect, Lakeland has been a safe, challenging, and nurturing place to follow Christ and his great mission. This is God’s doing. He makes things grow. And I praise him for the gift of this household of faith in Christ that he has given to us!

“"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”

COLOSSIANS 1:15-18

PRAYER Father, thank You for sending Your Son, the risen Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Lord and Savior of this church body. With our gaze firmly fixed on You, ever attentive to Your Word, and by the power of your Spirit, may Your good will be done in each of us as it is in heaven.
If Jeremiah was the weeping prophet, I’ve become the crying deacon. Most of us get a little more wistful or “soft” as we grow older, but I’d have to say that since we’ve been at Lakeland, twelve years now, I can recount completely losing it several times. Each time, I’ve regained my composure, feeling better for the catharsis, but wondering how the brothers or sisters around me felt about me after seeing me in my weakness and need. But trust me, being vulnerable becomes easier within the safety of a loving family.

The Body at Lakeland has seen us through several of the most significant trials of our lives. Our first child was diagnosed with a debilitating birth defect before he was born. We were relatively new to Lakeland, but we were gently cared for, supported, and prayed for unceasingly. When tests showed our second child had a likelihood of a different fatal birth defect, it would have been difficult to face the fear without the prayers of our friends and the constant reminders of God’s steadfastness and faithfulness. When my godly mother was taken home by a raging infection in the period of a day, the loss was wrenching and our family broken with pain. Again the prayers and kindnesses of the church were ministries of Jesus Himself to us.

Lakeland is a church where we bless the Name of the Lord, regardless of our circumstances. We have hope and assurance that His word and promises to us are true, and that the Resurrection ensures a restoration of life in its fullest form. We show we believe that, not only with words, but with acts of love and encouragement. We will be forever grateful for the love of our Lakeland family during hard times. Now, we, too, hope to love and comfort you with the comfort shown to us by God Himself.

**PRAYER**

Dear Father, we will be eternally grateful that You and Your worshippers at Lakeland lovingly cared for us in our times of distress. Thank You for breaking down the walls of pride and fear that kept us from knowing such loving care before. Help and equip us to care for one another as an act of love and worship for You.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4
After his introduction to Romans, Paul declares, “the gospel is the power of God for salvation.” Amazing! A message spoken, sound traveling through the air, carries with it the power of God to regenerate a dead heart and render it alive in worship. As members of Christ’s Church, we are given an amazing privilege to witness, and even participate, in the new birth and transformation of people through the gospel.

Right after we began offering “Meet Lakeland,” a woman was in attendance who had been at Lakeland only briefly. In the weeks that followed, we had a chance to visit and walk through the gospel. God wonderfully brought her to Himself as she responded in repentance and trust. She was stunned by the freedom that Christ purchased at such a right price.

Not long ago she brought her niece to church. Her niece has also responded to the gospel. Then, in our last Alpha class, she brought her neighbor, who joined the course and now attends the follow up course we call, “Christian Foundations.” I marveled how the Spirit of God has brought change and impact through her. Such is the power of the gospel spoken through His people.

Of course there is much more detail and delight to this story, as there is with so many other stories that could be told. But the question on my heart today focuses rather on how many stories are awaiting us in our future. Each time the gospel goes forward, some Christian shares it. It usually doesn’t come out by itself. Nor does it come out without staring down a few fears that stand in the way. But as it is shared, God honors it. Can we pray that God would make Lakeland an even more powerful testimony for Christ in the hearts of those He has placed in our lives? May it be one day soon when every current member of Lakeland is able to point to someone new to Christ and His church that God reached through them. May He make it hard to live anywhere near us and not hear the message of Christ, to His glory!

PRAYER Lord, would You embolden and empower Your people at Lakeland so that all of Your church prays, watches, and shares the gospel with all You lead to them, and this as a way of life. Would You make it the norm, not the exception, that each of us participate in Your bringing people to Yourself. May You use us to bring praise to Your name!
I have been going to adult Sunday school for most of my adult life. I have been to so many classes on finances that I can’t remember how many. Sitting in a Lakeland Learning Center class, I wondered to myself, “How does someone like LeTourneau get to the place where they can give 90% of their income and still claim they could do more?”

After that, while I didn’t give up my ‘day job,’ I did start a new business related to real estate. In 2006, the conventional wisdom was that this would have high potential of success and financial return. In 2009, the real estate market has gone nearly completely dormant. But, I would have to say, that is one of the best things ever for my faith journey.

Success or not success has no relation to growing in faith. As I studied the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30), a couple of things jumped out at me. Two slaves put all they were entrusted with into play, and they were commended. The poor guy who feared the outcome and possible losses hid the money he was given. He was called worthless and lazy. Now this is not a call to reckless fiscal behavior, but it is a call not to be timid in trusting the Lord with His resources He is entrusting us with.

Another thing I have learned in this process is that I do not grow spiritually when things are going my way nearly as much as when I am driven to my knees or even to my face by the hurdles only God can surmount. Sometimes God brings these difficulties to our everyday life, but I found that I needed to put myself in a place where God could work to His glory, and not because I am so gifted. I am clearly not that.

There is no wonderful ending to this story yet. But God has sought me and desired my dependence on Him. I cannot depend on the bank book, the marketing plan, the sales, or the closings. These things are really all in His hands. What freedom comes from really believing that? As I consider the capital campaign and the Lord’s work at Lakeland, I will pray for yet another step of faith to see what the Lord will do through my little gifts.

PRAYER Lord, give me faith to trust You with every possession I call my own. Help me to relinquish ownership back to You, Who is the rightful Owner of everything. Help me to be bold in You. Bring us to a high place of faith and throw open the floodgates of heaven that Your work at Lakeland will be abundantly provided for.
When I first started attending Lakeland in the summer of 2003, I was overwhelmed by the welcoming influence of several men in the church. I was struck by both their humility and godliness in welcoming me as a new-comer to the church. Several weeks into visiting, I looked on the back of the bulletin and noticed the list of elders, over half of the elders had been men I had come into contact with and had been impressed with as Jesus-followers.

I realize not everyone is going to have this same experience and as Lakeland continues to grow, it makes it difficult for the elders to be in the lives of every person, but I am blessed by the godly-servant leadership at Lakeland for the last 30 years, and I am convinced will be a part of our future for the next 30 years.

Elders are those that have been set apart by the leading of Jesus to ‘shepherd’ the church. They are both examples to us as well as those leading us forward in following our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To do that, 1 Peter 1:5-11, in its context, calls for us (as a church) to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand and He will lift us up in His timing.

What does it look like for you to ‘clothe yourself with humility’ and to ‘humble yourself under God’s mighty hand’? What areas in your life do you need to be specifically ‘watchful’ in? Claim the power of Jesus to resist the enemy and stand firm in your faith in Christ. Right now, in this season of your life, what are areas where you need to be restored? Confirmed? Strengthened? Or established? Turn to Jesus and specifically label that area of your life as being under His mighty hand.

The Bible also calls us to pray for our elders. Take a bulletin and pray for an elder each day of the week. Pray thanksgiving and gratitude for the Lord’s leading in appointing this shepherd of Lakeland. Pray for his sensitivity to the Lord’s leading and for protection over his marriage and family.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are the Chief Shepherd of Lakeland. We trust You and seek Your leading as you move us into the next 30 years as a church body. We are so grateful for the elders you have called for such a time as this and we pray over them that they may be used to lead Lakeland in humble obedience to Jesus and His Kingdom. Jesus, You have called us to Your eternal glory. We trust You and thank You for life!

“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory…”

1 PETER 1:8
During the summer of 2007, Lisa and I moved to Deerfield so I could begin seminary. Because both Lisa and I had known Seth Fagerland since we served together at a Bible camp in rural North Dakota 7 years previously, we decided to visit Lakeland to see him. We liked the church, but it didn't really feel like home to me until Seth talked me into helping out with Crossing.

Since that time, I have been repeatedly challenged and encouraged by the youth of this church and their passion to seek Christ. Our youth have caught a fire for loving God and each other that impresses me deeply. I'm fairly certain I take away just as much (if not more!) from the average Friday night as any of the students. When I started attending Lakeland, my plans for the future centered on a preaching pastorate, but through my time with Crossing, God has stirred up in me a passion for working with youth. I don't consider that a coincidence. This congregation is dedicated to serving the Lord, making it only natural that he should reveal his will through Lakeland.

God himself spoke to Moses and called him into service, and yet Moses was reluctant, feeling inadequate. It seems almost comical, yet we so often do the same thing. Is there a ministry opportunity that you have been avoiding out of fear of inadequacy or failure? Moses could never have imagined the way God would use him. Sometimes we don't realize how we are uniquely gifted until God surprises us by working through us in ways we have never expected. Ask God to open your heart to serving him, no matter where he calls, even if that is in a direction you've never considered before.

Once he listened to God, the outcome of Moses' service was literally of Biblical proportions, even though his obedience was reluctant. God has brought you to Lakeland for a unique purpose. If you haven't yet found your place to serve, start praying right now that He would reveal that to you, and don't stop asking Him until you've found your place to serve. Then, dive right in and see for yourself just how much of a blessing giving can really be.

PRAYER Lord, I confess that I am too calculating in my service, giving just enough but not too much that it would be costly. You did not invest in me in a calculating fashion, but rather lavish love and over-abundance. Help me today to trust You in service, recognizing that You love a cheerful giver.
There have been several times in my life where it has been so clear that ‘I can’t do this, but God can.’ One of those times brought me to Trinity for seminary, and ultimately to Lakeland. The second time was when God led me to become youth pastor. Both times I was completely overwhelmed by my own lack of ability to do what was before me. It put me in a place where the only thing I had to trust in was God.

These were scary, yet very exciting times in my life, where I walked daily by faith that the Lord would provide everything I needed. I loved how real my relationship with Jesus became during these times. The imagery that came to mind was when the Nation of Israel was crossing the Jordan. It wasn’t until the Ark of the Covenant went down in the water did the waters back up and allow the people to cross. That was a major step of faith for those priests. But that is our God; He delights in and responds to the faith of His people.

God’s plan was not just to get the Nation of Israel across the Jordan River. That was merely means to the greater end of Him establishing, for Himself, a people in the Promised Land that would bear His Name and make Him known to the world.

The same is true with our lives today. There will be ‘Jordan River’ moments where God is asking, not only you as an individual, but together, corporately as a church, to step out and act in faith in Him. His greater goal is seeing His Kingdom come in Lake County and throughout the whole world. And He will do that through His people.

PRAYER
Lord Jesus, may Your Kingdom come to Lake County. From the beginning, You have created us to trust Your goodness. May we, as Your people at Lakeland, set ourselves apart and take steps of faith to make You known to this community, this country, and to this world. To Your Name be the glory!

“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’ “

JOSHUA 3:5
I had the wonderful privilege of serving Lakeland as its first pastor for nearly 15 years, and to this day, when I think of that period of ministry, my heart is filled with thanksgiving. I too, with the apostle Paul, “thank my God upon every remembrance of you [Lakeland]... because of your partnership in the Gospel.”

It would difficult to select only a few reasons I am thankful for the work God did at Lakeland, but the overwhelming memory I have is that there was a strong sense that we were “partners in the Gospel.” True ministry cannot be a one-man show, nor can it be a free-for-all with everyone doing what is right in his or her own eyes. Partnership is a joining together in a common cause – the Gospel – and working together, with our unique gifts, to accomplish what we could never do alone.

When we grasp that the greater impact of ministry comes from partnering together, we experience a freedom from feeling as if the whole ministry rests on our shoulders. There is also liberation from the expectation that we have to control how ministry is accomplished. The great joy of serving at Lakeland was the commitment of the elders and staff to recognize their God-appointed roles in serving the body. I cannot recall a time when “selfish ambition” got in the way of serving as partners in the glorious goal of making much of Christ.

There is nothing quite like contributing to a team ministry knowing you are valued and cared for as a uniquely gifted member of the body of Christ. Take time this week to say thank you to a brother or sister who enriches the body of Christ by the use of their gifts. Thank them for their partnership with you in the Gospel.

Partnership in ministry is an invigorating and liberating truth I was privileged to learn at Lakeland, and I pray God will continue to extend the Gospel of Christ “as each does its part.”

**PRAYER**

Father, may a spirit of partnership pulsate through the lives of my brothers and sisters at Lakeland. May they see the beauty of the gifts of God’s people and the value each brings to advancing the Kingdom. Enable them to see what You are doing in and through them as a team and keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and His purposes.
When we moved to the area and were looking for a church home, we visited several good churches, but nothing "clicked." We visited Lakeland on a Sunday in August because we had seen the sign as we drove down Hunt Club Road the day before. We enjoyed our visit, and while we were there, we heard about a Backyard Bible Club, which was starting the following morning.

Since we had three young children at the time, I decided to take them to the club. When we arrived, I was graciously invited to stay and observe. So I did... I stayed the whole week.

The other moms, who were leading the club, not only welcomed me, but went out of their way to befriend me. At the end of the week, when they went out for their celebration lunch, they even invited me - a virtual stranger - to tag along.

Their hospitality was one of the primary reasons we stayed at Lakeland. And, it is one of the many reasons I am passionate about Bible clubs now. We think we are ministering to kids (and we are!), but God is busy using us in unexpected ways as well.

"Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you."

3 JOHN 1:5

PRAYER Father in heaven, I am so grateful for Your kindness shown through my sisters at Lakeland. I pray we will continue to be a church that shows Your love to strangers who come through our doors. I pray You will give us opportunities to bless others in unexpected ways as we listen expectantly for the prompting of Your Holy Spirit.
In our twenty years at Lakeland, my husband and I have had the opportunity to serve in a number of capacities. One of the most challenging roles we served in was as Growth Group leaders. It was also one of the most rewarding, and we certainly learned more than we taught. I remember most clearly the day I learned the concept of a “sacrifice of praise.”

Our phone rang unexpectedly one August morning around 6:00 am. It was a member of our growth group. Laura had just received an urgent phone call from Loyola Hospital where her husband, Bob, was a patient. Bob was recovering from a setback following his bilateral lung transplant several weeks before and was expected to return home later that same day. Laura had been told: “Bob has taken a turn for the worse.” Feeling unable to face the situation alone, she asked me to accompany her on the trip to Loyola.

The trip through morning rush hour traffic seemed endless. When we entered the intensive care unit, the nurse directed us away from the patient care area to a small room down the hall. The doctor and nurse came in and told us Bob had died, suddenly and unexpectedly. After a two year wait on the transplant list, which had resulted in Bob’s receiving a “perfect” pair of lungs, we struggled to see God’s hand in this inconceivable turn of events.

When we arrived in his room, Laura threw herself on the bed beside him and wailed with the anguish of the newly bereaved. As I sat on the other side, I struggled with the feeling of being so inadequate to bring her any comfort. As I wept and prayed silently, a praise song came into my mind. The pressure seemed to grow from inside as if the song was forcing itself out of my mouth. I found myself singing praise to the LORD in the midst of our tears. Laura joined in and together we sang praise to our mighty God, even though we could not understand why Bob was gone.

Praising the LORD in the midst of grief and confusion did not help us to understand why Bob had died, but it did bring us both comfort. Through the act of praise, we were reminded how great our God is and how very capable He is to carry his people through their trials.

PRAYER

Lord, in great pain and sorrow You meet us in ways that change our hearts. You have, often through so much pain, helped us see better how great You are. Help me this day to pray for those who are hurting and to praise You even when in the middle of great sadness and pain. Help me to come alongside another brother or sister just as Jesus, our empathetic High Priest, comes alongside us.”
As a member of the elder board, we witness and engage in many complicated struggles. After a particularly long and gut-wrenching episode, a newly recognized elder suggested that as an elder board, we needed to seek repentance and ask for forgiveness for decisions that, in hindsight, were made blindly.

After personal and corporate prayer, the board not only recounted its errors and begged forgiveness of the church, but we sought out families, groups, and individuals for their forgiveness until we could find no one else to seek out for restitution.

Lakeland is a church of imperfect people led by fallible elders. Lakeland is a church where mistakes are welcomed and people are restored in Christ. Lakeland is a church where confession is a sign of strength, not weakness; where forgiveness is marked as spiritual maturity rather than compromise; where relationships are restored and not replaced. Lakeland is a place of life and death. Death to ourselves and replaced by the exchanged life of Jesus Christ within.

PRAYER Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You. In You there is life and restoration, freedom and peace. Help me to seek peace with the body of Christ. Lead me into Your patience and grace. Thank You.

"But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

JOHN 3:21
When we first came to Lakeland, we got to know Dr. John Dunlop. At the time, we were living in an apartment while our home was being built in a new subdivision in Gurnee. While attending a newcomers’ group that met in his home, Dr. John reminded us to pray for our neighbors to know the Lord. We met our next door neighbors periodically while we inspected our new home, and over the course of time, we got to know them quite well.

After our homes were complete and we moved in, Nancy and I had opportunities to share with them, but we made real progress as Nancy spent more time with the woman next door. This was possible because Nancy had lost her job. Over the course of time, our neighbors visited Lakeland, which eventually led to Pastor Doug visiting their home and leading them to the Lord. They have attended Lakeland ever since and have been a real blessing to Lakeland. Solo Deo Gloria.

Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, exhorts believers to pray with thanksgiving and to pray for those bringing the word to others.

What are you thankful for? What is the greatest gift God has given you? Have you ever considered praying that God would use you and others to share your faith, and then looked for opportunities? Over the many years we have known the Lord, praying for opportunities has often led to opportunities. Is there someone the Holy Spirit is bringing to your mind for whom you should pray?

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned.”

COLOSSIANS 4:2-3

Father in Heaven, thank You so much for my salvation in Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, thank You for coming into my life and giving me eternal life. Dear Lord, please open a door for the gospel for my friend ______________ who needs you. Please use me and others to accomplish Your work of salvation in their life.
I’ve been thinking back over these 20 years we have been at Lakeland, trying to identify any one event or person that stands out in my memory of God’s blessing here. But I keep seeing the faces of many people who are part of this church. Each of these people has been the powerful tool of God in shaping my life and encouraging me in my following Jesus.

Whenever I run into you, I am often struck by the glory of God I see in you, in your whole life. That gives me deep joy and strength. The more I happen to know about you, the ups and the downs of your life, the more blessing I receive from seeing Jesus in you.

I see you whom have been pulled by God out of some slimy pit, out of the mud and mire of life, you whom God has given a firm place to stand. You know who you are. When I meet you, I often say to myself: “When I grow up, I want to be like you.”

I see the woman who has been betrayed too many times in her life by the very ones she has trusted and loved the most. I see the man who perseveres by the power of Christ in overcoming addiction, depression, and the ongoing consequences of many bad choices in his past life. I see children who should not have survived birth or lived a normal life, being loved and nurtured by godly parents. I see older couples who have long ago gotten over themselves, and who now live for the joy and mission of God.

You all count! You shine like stars. God feeds my soul by being with you in this church body. As David says in Psalm 40, “I have seen and heard about the good work of God in your life” and that has truly helped me fear the LORD and put my trust in him.

**PRAYER**

Father God, I thank You for the great cloud of witnesses You have graced us with here at Lakeland. I praise You for the many wonders You have done in each life. Make us grateful for You and for one another. Stir our hearts to share Your light with those who are still desperate to find their rest—their firm Rock to stand on—in You.
Have you ever served in ministry with a broken heart? That was my condition as I taught preschool in December 2008. I prayed for strength to serve and God sent a huge blessing and encouragement in a small package.

I was leading song time and it was time to sit in a circle for quiet songs. Priyanka Somani, 5 years old, danced to the middle of the circle in her lovely Sunday dress and then backed herself into my lap. Priyanka is usually quite active during singing, but on this day, she quietly snuggled close to me, allowing me to wrap my arms around her as we sang, “Jesus Loves Me”.

My heart was hurting because I was missing my grown daughter who had moved to Africa a few months before. It would be our first Christmas apart. God put another little girl into my lap for just a few moments, but that was enough. I’ve known the Lord’s love for many years, but in that moment, through the ministry of a beautiful child, I experienced His love in a fresh and deep way.

God is active, answering prayer, giving us strength, blessing, and encouraging us, often through each other and sometimes through the littlest among us.

“Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud He pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

PSALM 31:23-24

PRAYER  Father, You know my greatest needs, my deepest hurts. I trust You with them. Help me to serve You well today and to see the encouragement You provide.
“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.”

PSALM 9:1