

# Joy IN THE JOURNEY

Activities & Service Opportunities of Mayfair Church of Christ

## Randy Fowler: A Lifetime Servant

By Don Gardner

For nearly a quarter of a century, Randy Fowler has served Mayfair families in various roles, capping a career in ministry that has spanned over forty years. In that time, his work for the Lord's church has taken him and Rhonda and their children Jonathan and Rebecca from one end of the state of Alabama to the other and back home again.

I first met Randy in June 1981 when we both were employed in the offices at a local manufacturing firm in Huntsville. Though we only worked together for six months, Randy became my confidant and a source of strength as I was struggling through a difficult phase in my life.

While working full-time in private industry, he was also serving as a part-time Youth Minister at the Lincoln Church of Christ. He had previously worked at the Gurley Church of Christ, where he and Rhonda were worshipping when their children, Jonathan and Rebecca were born.

After leaving that job in private industry, Randy went on to serve as the full-time Youth and Education Minister at the Mastin Lake Road Church of Christ in Huntsville before moving his family south to serve as the Youth Minister at the Westgate Church of Christ in Dothan, Alabama. Later, the Fowlers returned to North Alabama and Randy became the Youth Minister at the Madison Church of Christ before finally coming to Mayfair in 1999.

From his arrival at Mayfair in 1999 until 2017, Randy served as the Children's Minister before transitioning into the role of Family Life Minister. As you look around Mayfair, you can see Randy's fingerprints on so many ministries which he started including the Mayfair Children's Library, the Family Prayer Room, Prayer Warriors, Kids Basketball Camps, Bible Memory Challenge, Day Camp, Children's Day, Baby Day, 5th/6th Grade Ministry, Family Milestones, Annual Fall Festivals, Upward Basketball, and the John Rosemond parenting seminars. His contributions go



**Randy and Rhonda Fowler admire the quilt he received upon his recent retirement.**

beyond the spiritual development of Mayfair families as he initiated the safety and security procedures involving a check-in and information desk for parents.

In addition to his work in the area of the Children's ministry, Randy worked with the Six40 class in the startup of 2820, a ministry to serve the homeless in the community, initiated the use of the RightNow Media program, and worked in conjunction with Doug Smith to lead the Grace Marriage and Grief-Share workshops and the Unbroken Jars podcast.

Randy's commitment to community outreach is especially evident through the startup of the 2820 ministry in which he serves with his son Jonathan who shared this thought on his dad's hands-on involvement in ministry: "Over 3 years ago I told my dad I am tired of just going to church and want to be church...He told me he understood and next thing I knew we were serving together at 2820."

What will Randy Fowler do in retirement: "My plans are to work part-time at **The Livin' Room [2820]** and the community work being done there. I also hope to spend more time with our grandkids and go camping in our camper. And to just see what doors of ministry and adventure the Lord will make available."

One thing is for certain, even in retirement, Randy Fowler's presence will still be evident at Mayfair. As

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he says, “I will also be a point of contact for Mayfair’s involvement there through our 2820 ministry here with a group of deacons/ministry leaders. I am looking for opportunities to share what is going [on] there in our Bible classes beginning in May. I will continue to be a part of Griefshare and with MCDC as an advisor and/or board member. Will take time and look for other ways I may be called to serve here.”



**A large crowd came out to honor Randy Fowler upon his retirement.**

There are many who sing Randy’s praises, but here are just a few testimonies about the nature of this servant of the Lord.

“When I was in middle school and high school I remember my friends telling me my dad was cool. Kinda a weird thing that I didn’t understand because as a middle/high schooler...your dad isn’t supposed to be cool. My dad taught me many things even when I acted like I wasn’t listening...which was the majority of the time. Many times, I would say things (sometimes even things I didn’t believe myself) to try and get a reaction out of him or to see if I could get his true feelings. He would 90% of the time keep that middle ground and not get too hot after some ridiculous comments...I think that is what makes my dad a great leader” – Jonathan Fowler (Randy’s son).

“See Mr. Randy doesn’t just put on a front for the church he works for or the people that go there but he is who he is everywhere he goes and anyone he encounters... he loves everyone like Jesus and like we are called to do. Who you see on Sunday is exactly who you see every other day of the week—as many have said he is the real deal. He taught my brother and me to work hard, love others and be GENUINE

and those weren’t through his words but his actions” – Rebecca Fowler (Randy’s daughter).

“Personally, throughout my life, Randy has influenced my walk with Christ and my direction in my career. His humble hardworking nature with the right balance of humor thrown in helps keep us focused on God while making sure that the joy of the Lord is represented. Randy has decided to retire, but I don’t think he realizes the legacy that he leaves” – Doug Smith (Mayfair Connections Minister).

“I will never forget, after Andrew passed away, Randy and Doug Smith sitting with us in our dining room planning his Celebration of Life service. Andrew was one of Randy’s interns for a few years. And to say Andrew was a Randy fan would be an understatement. In fact, our whole family are Fowler fans! And always will be! God bless you, Randy, in your days ahead” – Cindy Rieder (Mayfair member).

Asked about the struggles along the way, Randy offered this, “One of our biggest challenges came early when we made the move to Dothan, Alabama, to serve at the Westgate congregation. In a period of less than six months, my dad had a heart attack and open heart surgery, and our son, Jonathan was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. The church there rallied behind us and Rhonda and I both grew so much through that experience and the Lord blessed our efforts.”

Randy added this, “I could not have done all that God has allowed us to do in ministry without the full support of my sweet wife, Rhonda. She walked alongside my many crazy adventures and places ministry has taken us. I know that the Mayfair leadership hired me because they knew they were getting her in the process. She has such a great heart for the Lord, her family, and others and has volunteered and filled in emergency needs in children’s ministry for me for years.”





## God Hardened the Hearts of the Egyptians and Pharaoh

By Dick Savage

*But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites (Exodus 7:3-4 NIV).*

*I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen" (Exodus 14:17-18 NIV).*

From these two passages, we can conclude that God hardened the hearts of the Pharaoh and the Egyptians. I have wondered, read, and heard discussion about why God would harden their hearts. Did He not want to save them? On the surface, it seems like God does not really give them a choice. It has been argued by some that God punished the Egyptians for doing what He caused them to do. But can this really be true?

After the first few plagues, Pharaoh agreed to grant Moses' requests, if Moses would stop that particular plague. After the plague was terminated, Pharaoh would then harden his own heart and not let the Hebrews leave. Eventually, God hardened Pharaoh's heart and the hearts of the Egyptians so that He, God, could demonstrate His power over the gods of Egypt. How do we explain the fact that just when the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians start to soften, God hardens their hearts so he can inflict more suffering on them? That does not seem fair. It also seems to make Scripture contradictory because we are told: *"Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?" (1 Samuel 6:6 NASB).* In one passage it is God hardening the hearts and in another, they are hardening their own hearts.

Up until a few years ago, this was difficult to explain. Either we took Calvin's position: "God can do what He wants and who are we to question" or we accept the attempts made to explain that this was just a Hebrew idiom meaning "I will permit his heart



**Pharaoh's Hard Heart**

to be hardened." It sounds good but few Hebrew scholars have accepted this understanding, and modern translations don't render this passage as "I will permit Pharaoh's heart to be hardened."

However, in recent years there have been new discoveries about the Classical Hebrew language, being learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholars now know a few things about Classical Hebrew that Calvin did not know. They know things about the Classical Hebrew that ancient rabbis of the middle ages did not know and they are still learning new things.

One thing that has been recently learned is the nature of the active voice in Hebrew. The word "harden" in Hebrew is "akesheh" meaning "to be hardened, stubborn," etc. This is found in a Hiphil imperfect form, first person singular. Clearly, it is God saying, *"I will cause Pharaoh's heart to be hardened."* However, this is in an active voice, and scholars have now learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the discovery of the Ugaritic language that when a verb is in a Hiphil active form it becomes permissive. Thus, scholars have grammatical evidence that this should be translated; *"I will permit Pharaoh's heart to be hardened."* Calvin would have loved that. Only by the grace of God would Pharaoh's heart not be hardened. In other words, our hearts are hardened to God, to begin with, and it is only through His grace that our hearts soften to God. Yet, we learn in Genesis 6:3 that God's Spirit will not always strive with man. There will come a time when, like with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, God will remove the convicting power of His Spirit and we go back to

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our hardened hearts.

Another view of these ancient writings deals with the concept of a hard heart being a heavy heart. Each time the text says Pharaoh's heart grew hard (heavy), he becomes more and more guilty when compared to the standard of what is right and wrong. At times, God is said to be the one hardening Pharaoh's heart which is referring to God judging Pharaoh to be guilty of wrongdoing.

It is by grace that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8) and that is a gift of God. It would appear Calvin was right after all; even our hearts longing for God is a gift from God. It is God who makes the overtures to us, and we respond to Him. Unlike Calvin, however, I believe this is offered to all people and God will strive with man for a long time, but one day, if we continue in our sins, God may just withdraw His convicting Spirit and allow our hearts to go back to its

normal state and be hardened.

However, the real point is that any desire one has for God comes from God. It is a gift from Him. He's the one who gave you the desire, to begin with. Without that gift, you would be like Pharaoh and have a hard heart. Pharaoh had his chance and blew it, but then God came in and softened his heart but when he still refused to yield to God, God again withdraw his convicting Spirit and Pharaoh let his sinful nature rule.

Whatever the case may be, we need to recall that God's hardening Pharaoh's heart is not what is bringing Pharaoh under God's judgment. Pharaoh has already come under judgment, as have the people and gods of Egypt. This act at the time of the plagues is only the means of giving Pharaoh and the Egyptians what they have earned under the judgment of God. God is free to exercise His judgment at any time He chooses and can use any means to carry out the punishment based upon His judgment.

## **Beyond the Threads**

By Christy Troxell

Have you ever felt like you wanted to help with a ministry at church, but just didn't know how to get involved? Perhaps you felt there were more than enough people performing a particular service. Maybe you just felt you couldn't find your niche.

Well, I'm sure a lot of us are struggling to find our place, but we all have the talent to help in some way. When Nancy Nipper heard that I crocheted, she asked me if I would be interested in crocheting dishcloths for Baja. Well, of course, I would! All the while, I was thinking to myself, "This is my niche."

Nancy asked me to find other ladies willing to help me make 300 dishcloths to take on an upcoming mission trip. Shug Montgomery agreed to help me and together, we made all 300. In addition to continuing to make the dishcloths for missions, we made granny squares for Afghans, candy cane ornaments for last year's Tuesday morning Ladies' Class Christmas party and heart coasters for Valentine's Day. You never know what fun project we'll decide to do next.

I realized that this was how I could incorporate my little talent for good, to help the Lord's church. This made me realize that we needed a crochet/knitting ministry at Mayfair, so in February 2022, I started "Beyond the Threads Ministry" at Mayfair. It is my

hope that it will become an intergenerational group to teach younger girls how to crochet.

There are currently 6-10 ladies who are committed and very supportive as well as two younger girls. We would like to see that number grow because as we get older, we want to see the younger ones learn so the ministry we started can continue after we are gone.

Not only are these crocheters/knitters doing good work for the Lord's kingdom, but they have also blessed my life. I needed some friends and they are more than friends, they are my sisters. I am so thankful for them and I love them.



**Beyond the Threads Ministry**

# ***“Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life” (Proverbs 16:31 ESV)***

In this issue of JOY in the Journey, we continue our series on Mayfair’s senior Members, who truly wear a “Crown of Glory”, as we learn more about B.J. and Fran Strickland, Malcolm Rives, and John and Jo Price.

## **Serving Senior Saints**

### **B.J. and Fran Strickland**

By Lisa Yokley

B.J. and Fran Strickland have been influential members of the Mayfair congregation since the early 1970s. They are part of a special group of Christians over the age of 90, that shines as a beacon for all to see as we continue the journey of serving the Lord in our own lives.

There has hardly ever been a time in B.J.’s life that he was not preaching the gospel, but after sitting down and talking with the Stricklands, I have a better understanding of the journey he has taken along with his beautiful helper and lovely wife Fran. As with anyone, his background and experiences have made him the person he is today.

Bedford Joe Sam Strickland was born Oct. 7, 1927, in the tiny town of Shinbone, Alabama. His parents, Rufus Erwin and Vera Cobb Strickland were affectionately referred to as “Pop” and “Mom” by many. His father was a farmer, a carpenter, and a minister of the gospel. B.J.’s mother was a school teacher and homemaker. His sister Juanita married Jep Mitchell, who served as an elder at one time for the Lakewood and Landmark congregations in Montgomery. Bobbie, his other sister, married Gary Bradley who has served as a minister of numerous churches of Christ through the years and has been a great influence in the brotherhood, especially at Mayfair.

B.J. learned hard work from an early age. He started by working the family farm around the age of 12, growing vegetables and other food items for the family. With the Great Depression impacting our country during his childhood, he worked as many jobs as he could. At 15, his family moved to Anniston, AL for Pop’s job and B.J. worked in a small grocery store in addition to his regular chores. This helped him get his start in the grocery business

where he worked for the next 40 years.

In 1952, B.J. married Mary Frances Mercer (Fran), daughter of Mary Ellen and Joe Mercer. Fran and B.J. did “all things church” beginning with their dating days and continuing to serve as a team in the Lord’s church. The Mercer family served as leaders at the Borden Springs Church of Christ where Fran was raised. The men preached, led singing, and took care of the building and the ladies fed the visiting preachers, taught Sunday school, and sang at area funerals.



**B.J. and Fran Strickland**

Eventually, all of Fran’s family became members at Mayfair. Her sister, Libby, and husband Ray Jones were the first couple to be married at the Mayfair building on Whitesburg Drive in 1960. B.J. and Fran

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then came to Mayfair around 1970, and Fran's brothers, Bob, Jerry, and Jim, and their families followed after that.

The Stricklands moved several times as B.J. was promoted in the grocery store business. They eventually moved to Huntsville where he was hired by Winn Dixie as District Manager covering 39 stores. He worked for Winn Dixie until age 55 after which he became licensed in insurance, securities, and real estate, but throughout his career, he spent much of his time preaching the gospel in churches big and small all across Alabama.

Circa 1975, B.J. and Fran were attending a sales meeting in Montgomery. While there, they attended the Ann Street Church of Christ, a congregation that offered an early morning service for those who had to work on Sunday. It struck a chord with them that Mayfair needed to offer a similar service in Huntsville. They came home and went to work to get this service started and the 6 o'clock service was born!

In nearly 50 years, many people have benefited from this service including firefighters, police officers, medical professionals, plant workers, athletic teams, caregivers, bus drivers, vacationers, and government employees. People from all walks of life and from many areas across the southern United States have been blessed by the 6 o'clock service. Some who have attended this service have returned to their home congregations and started a similar service in their area.

There have been helpers along the way who support this service by opening the building, greeting, leading singing, serving the Lord's Supper, saying prayers, and preaching. Occasionally, different men have preached throughout the years but most of the time it has been B.J. sharing the gospel message usually from memory.

The service has had as high as 30 in attendance but consistently has 10-20 each week. Over the years, numerous baptisms have been connected to this service that we know of, but as is always the case in the Lord's kingdom, we never know the full harvest of the seeds that were sown. We do know that if we plant and water, God gives an increase.

The Stricklands have been involved in many areas of ministry since coming to Mayfair. B.J. served as an

elder for about 20 years in addition to preaching at the 6 o'clock service. Fran has always been by his side as a constant support serving as a Sunday school teacher, a coordinator with Ladies' Bible Class, a Vacation Bible School teacher, an elder's wife, and most recently as his "right hand" with the 6 o'clock service. She also has had a wonderful "card ministry" that she has diligently maintained for years. It would be difficult to find many people in our congregation that haven't received a lovely handwritten card from her in their time of joy, sorrow, or need.



B.J. said, "From the day we married, Fran has been by my side, faithfully serving in whatever we were doing. A man is limited without a good wife's support and my darling wife has been that blessing to me."

He cites several things that occurred at Mayfair during his years as an elder. The Whitesburg Drive location continued to have increased attendance due to local outreach. Mayfair also hosted several appreciation events for firefighters, policemen, and educators to name a few. While he was part of the eldership, he helped secure Gary Bradley as the pulpit minister, Lem Tipton, and then later Lee Milam as the youth minister.

The secret to his Christianity, B.J. says, has been to locate and become involved in church wherever his path took him and Fran and to stay in the Word. As we look at the lives of the older generation who are still serving our great God into their nineties, we can be encouraged to do the same. Our objective should be to serve and glorify God all of our lives.

## Malcolm Rives

By Patrice Rives Miller

One of Malcolm Rives' earliest memories was when his family moved from Booneville, Tennessee to a hillside farm in Chestnut Ridge, Tennessee on a wagon pulled by horses and mules. He was about three years old and was sitting on top of a meat salt box in the wagon, worried he might bounce off the box and out of the wagon.

That night they had their first meal of pinto beans and cornbread in the dining room of the small farmhouse where they would live for the next 14 years. The house was heated by a fireplace and wood-burning stove. In the evenings, Malcolm completed his schoolwork, and read newspapers and the only two books in the house, a Bible and dictionary, by a kerosene lamp. He shared the upstairs bedroom with his older brother Ross. When it snowed, they would wake to find snowflakes that had blown in during the night and landed on top of their homemade quilt.

Several years later, Clyde (Malcolm's dad) and Ross installed a six-party telephone service. Electricity came to Chestnut Ridge in the late 1940s when Malcolm was a teenager. They traded a calf for a battery-operated radio and he listened to popular shows with his family.

During WWII, he, Ross, and their younger sister Colene walked a mile and a half to the bus stop. Each morning before school they would get up and milk the cows, clean up, have breakfast, and walk to catch the school bus by 7:00. In the evening, they would feed the cows and hogs. The family grew tobacco to sell along with eggs and milk, and they grew corn, cane, hay, and pumpkins to feed their cattle.

The Chestnut Ridge Church of Christ was built on a corner of their farmland. Malcolm was in charge of sweeping and dusting the seats. During the winters, he was responsible for lighting the two kerosene heaters in the auditorium early on Sunday mornings. It was a one-mile walk uphill from his farmhouse to the church, and he remembers several times walking through 6"- 8" of snow to light the heaters. This was just the prelude to his life spent serving and shepherding the church. Malcolm responded to the Gospel when he was 14 and went to the Shelbyville

Church to be baptized.

Family, church, and school shaped his life, and the Bible was the basis for his core values. He advanced through school and attended three different high schools in Petersburg, Fayetteville, and Lewisburg as his father transitioned from tobacco farming to a career with Interstate Life Insurance. Clyde served as an elder at the Lewisburg Church of Christ for 41 years.



**The Rives family—Malcolm, Eric, Patrice, Madolyn and Lydia**

Malcolm graduated from Marshall County High School in 1951. He attended Middle Tennessee State College and graduated in 1955 with a BS degree in Mathematics and minors in Physics and Chemistry. He was elected to student government and held leadership roles in many student organizations. While at MTSC, Malcolm enrolled in the ROTC and went on to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey for his Basic Army course and a three-month course on Electronic Warfare. He was assigned in January 1956 to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army, 9<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Battalion as a special weapons nuclear officer for a 16-month tour of duty in Germany during the Cold War.

Malcolm returned to the US and attended graduate studies in physics at Vanderbilt and UAH. He was later selected by NASA to attend a one-year study program in nuclear reactor engineering at the Oak Ridge School of Reactor Technology in Tennessee.

He began his work career with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Huntsville, where he worked on the Juno, Jupiter, and Pershing Launch Vehicles. He was responsible for the Pershing Weapon System nuclear

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warhead development and testing. He later transitioned to aerospace engineering with MSFC where he worked on several NASA projects, including the Saturn-V Reactor-In-Flight-Test vehicle, Saturn S-IVB Stage design, Saturn S-IVB Workshop, S-IVB Skylab, Saturn Apollo Test Mount, Apollo Lunar mission operations, X-Ray/Gama Ray/Cosmic Ray Observatories operations, Space Shuttle Vehicle design and operations requirements, Spacelab Missions Data collection and processing requirements, Aries-I and -V Launch Vehicles, and Engine design requirements development.

It was during his early years in Huntsville that his childhood friend, Dr. Billy Sam Moore, introduced him to a friend from Lipscomb: Madolyn Hudgens. Malcolm and Madolyn dated and soon married and settled in Huntsville. They were some of the early members of the Mayfair Church of Christ and were married for 59 years until Madolyn passed away in 2018. Malcolm served as a Mayfair deacon for about nine years and was a Mayfair elder for 43 years.

In their many years at Mayfair, Malcolm and Madolyn served and participated in all services and activities. They hosted numerous “ice cream suppers” during summer months, inviting other young Mayfair families and visiting missionaries. Madolyn taught four-year-old children in Sunday school classes for 62 years and used her music degree to create a Sunday afternoon children’s singing class that performed periodically for several years. Madolyn loved to entertain and frequently hosted and co-hosted numerous Mayfair baby showers and bridal teas. Mayfair was the center of their world.

There is a lobby wall at Mayfair where the original cross from the Whitesburg Drive location hangs. Surrounding it are numerous historic photos of Mayfair and if you look closely, you will see Malcolm in most of those photos.

They raised three children while attending Mayfair. Patrice (and Wade) Miller live in Dallas, Texas with their two sons. Lydia (and David) White live in Harvest, Alabama, and have two stepchildren. Eric (and Lisa) Rives live in Santa Clara, California, and have two sons.

Malcolm celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this past December with a family dinner and a brunch at Mayfair surrounded by many Mayfair friends, family, school friends, and other special friends. For his actual birthday on December 18, 2022, all he wanted was to attend the Mayfair church service. It was on that morning that about 1200 of his Mayfair family sang “Happy Birthday” to him.



**Malcolm Rives celebrating his 90th birthday**

Malcolm loves God with all of his heart, soul, and mind. He is characterized by humility and maintains a positive and cheerful attitude with a handsome smile and a twinkle in his eye. He is respected and loved deeply by all who know him and continues to provide counsel and guidance to those in need. He still prays the most beautiful prayers and has read the Bible in its entirety 10 times during the past four years and more times than he can count throughout his life.

Today, if you have to opportunity to visit him at Regency Retirement, you will find Malcolm there relaxing, working puzzles, or playing a competitive game of Scrabble. Every single day he wears one of his many Mayfair Church of Christ collared shirts and quietly goes about his day, being an example to others and inviting everyone he meets to attend the church he loves and helped to build. If you visit on a Sunday morning, you will find him at his computer watching a live stream of the Mayfair service, singing along with the hymns he has loved his entire life, and taking communion with his Mayfair family.



## John and Jo Price

By Mike Stamps

Johnnie Mac (John) Price was born on January 5, 1929, in Rogersville, Tennessee. His father passed away when he was 11 years old and his mother, Ruth, raised him and his two younger brothers, Henry and George, with help from their Aunt Cecile and Uncle Roo Dalton.

The aunt and uncle, who lived in Pressman's Home, Tennessee, not only provided a place where the boys spent much of their early years but also provided each of them with an education. John became a physicist and engineer, while Henry became a lawyer and George an architect.

Joanne (Jo) Ellis Price was born in August several years after John. I won't tell you the exact year she was born because my mother taught me better and I'd like to live a little longer, but I will say that she looks remarkable for her age.

Jo had one brother and three sisters. Her brother, Phil, and sister Dorothy passed away several years ago. Phil, who lived in the Tampa, Florida area, was an aircraft technician for Lockheed Martin, while Dorothy was a farmer's wife and lived in Lincoln County, Tennessee. Another sister, Betty, who passed recently, had been a nurse and missionary's wife in Africa. Jo's youngest sister, Peggy, was a minister's wife and still lives in Memphis.

Jo was born in Nashville and raised in Lincoln County, Tennessee. She graduated from Boone's Hill School in Lincoln County. She then went to David Lipscomb College for a year and then followed her friend and roommate, Midge, to Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Midge and Jo became lifelong best friends. Midge and her future husband introduced Jo to John Price, a young student from Rogersville, Tennessee. They dated for several years and married just before John was drafted and sent to El Paso, Texas, where he spent several years as a U.S. Army missile instructor. At the end of his tour of duty, he accepted a job at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville to be closer to her family in Fayetteville and they moved here in 1951.

Several years after arriving in Huntsville, John began a long and successful career with NASA. One of the projects he worked on while employed at NASA was solar power on Skylab. His last post with NASA



**John and Jo Price with their  
8 great-grandchildren**

was as project manager of the tethered satellite working with the Italian Government. After he retired, he spent a year working on several rental properties. He has always been a busy guy. He then returned to work for several years at Pace & Waite and Summa.

John and Jo lived in several places when they first moved to Huntsville, but eventually, they bought a lot on Monte Sano Mountain. They began building a house there and worked on it after work and on weekends. John had a hand in every aspect of that house, where they lived for twelve years before moving into the house in which they currently live in order to give their children a better school experience.

They were blessed with three daughters: Karen, Dana, and Bonnie. They have five grandsons, and eight (soon to be nine) great-grandchildren.

They were members of the Central Church of Christ until the early 1970's then moved to Mayfair so the girls could have access to a growing youth group.

I am blessed that they came to Mayfair where I met their youngest daughter, Bonnie, the love of my life, and the mother of my children. I am blessed to have them as my in-laws and they have helped me in many ways with my family. I am blessed to be part of a wonderful family and especially grateful to my sister-in-law Dana for her insight into their family background.

**Past issues of "JOY in the Journey" can be  
downloaded from the Mayfair website at  
[www.mayfair.org/joy](http://www.mayfair.org/joy)**

## Is There a Place for Anger in a Christian's Heart?

By John Porter

Do you find yourself constantly angry at the state of the world around you? "How have things gotten so bad? When I was growing up things were never like this!"

Your shepherds do not live as cloistered monks, hidden within the walls of the church building on Carl T. Jones Drive in Huntsville. We interact with people, our co-workers, customers, and clients. We meet and greet the people that live in our neighborhoods as they walk their dogs or work in their yards. We converse with close family members and distant relatives about worldly matters, and we listen to our brothers and sisters who worship with us at Mayfair. An increasing number of those we come in contact with, even within our flock, express anger at the way they perceive the world around us and where it is heading. This seems to be a prevailing sentiment in the world in general. If we could fashion a prayer to express our feelings of anger, we would probably fashion a prayer similar to David's prayer:

*Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!  
Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty  
men.  
For they speak against You wickedly;  
Your enemies take Your name in vain.  
Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?  
And do I not loathe those who rise up against  
You?  
I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them  
my enemies (Psalms 139:19-22 NKJV).*

When Nehemiah became upset after learning about the wealthy Israelites' exploitation of the poor he cried out: "When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry" (Nehemiah 5:6 NIV).

Even Jesus expressed anger at the Pharisees who exhibited such hard hearts (Mark 3:5) and at the crass commercialism that sullied the temple (Matthew 21:12-13). His anger conveyed extreme displeasure over sin. These examples are our keys to recognizing righteous anger.

So, is there a place for a follower of Christ to express anger? What does God say about this? Scripture contains many more verses warning believers against harboring or expressing anger than verses advocating such behavior. In Proverbs anger is connected to foolishness: "The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult" (Proverbs 12:16 ESV).

The apostle Paul recommends that we let our heavenly Father fight our battles. He encourages us to have the faith to let Him fight those battles and right those wrongs in His own way and in His own time: "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19 NIV).

What's noteworthy regarding David's prayer is that he called down curses on sworn enemies of God, and Nehemiah directed his irritation at the "haves" repressing the "have-nots." Both men were angry because of ungodly people or activities that were opposed to the will of God. Such anger is distinguished from our personal anger such as when someone pulls into the parking space we were patiently hoping to snag. Such personal anger we feel over worldly matters when someone has "wronged" us, has no place in a Christian heart. "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips" (Colossians 3:8 NIV).

Unrighteous anger that festers into hatred is never acceptable to God. Christ views anger in the same category as murder (Matthew 5:21-22). Road rage in its various forms is clearly not righteous anger and is therefore sinful.

No matter how reprehensible the people or activities we're condemning, we still aren't justified to sin in our responses: "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Ephesians 4:26 NIV).

The Book of James offers this thought: "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires" (James 1:19

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-20, NIV). It seems we should give whatever anger we are harboring to God every single night.

How does this affect me, a follower of Christ? As Christ-followers, is it appropriate for us to get upset over sin? Evils such as abuse, racism, abortion, pornography, and child sex trafficking should incense us. Anger against unrighteousness is a human emotion that can be a motivator for taking appropriate action. We should vigorously share with others the love of God and the salvation found through the me-

diation of Jesus on our behalf. We should encourage others to *“act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8 NIV)*. Our anger should lead us to prayer and towards righteous actions, to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world today. We should advocate for the truth, with love, where God’s will is plain and simple, even in the face of condemnation from the world.

Ultimately, if our outrage results in restoring people into loving, healing relationships with Jesus, it’s righteous anger. Let’s display our anger righteously and wait upon the Lord.

## Preventive Caring

By Butch Kinzer, MD

At the onset of COVID, our Shepherds were extremely concerned about the physical health of their flock. It was at a time when little was known concerning the transmission and disease course of COVID. It was known that people could get very sick and die. Various means were employed to prevent or at least minimize transmission without knowing if those measures were beneficial or not.

Against this backdrop, I was asked to chair an advisory committee consisting of ministers, members (both physicians and nonphysicians), and an elder. All contributed from their unique perspectives and most are aware the initial advice was to not meet in person. Remember that the mode of transmission was not known. This initial decision was made easier by the fact that our Mayfair Ministers had the ability to provide a meaningful worship experience virtually.

My observation of the health outcome of not meeting is that Mayfair had no cases of our members acquiring COVID as a result of Mayfair gatherings. That is an easy observation given that there were few, if any, Mayfair gatherings.

Anecdotally, I heard of multiple cases of COVID among churches that continued to meet. Sadly, deaths resulted among both the healthy and chronologically challenged, as a result of such gatherings.

The advisory committee Zoom meetings occurred frequently. Summer came, and the number of cases of COVID eased. It was found that being outside had a lower rate of transmission. This led to our

“Church on the Lawn” gatherings with masks optional. The gatherings were well attended, meaningful, and marked by the obvious need for fellowship being required. The weather changed and there was a return to exclusive virtual worship.

Shortly following the return to virtual worship, the first vaccines were being introduced, first to medical personnel and rapid responders. Within several months the elderly were invited to be vaccinated. This invitation within the next three months was extended to those aged 12 and over.

As expected by the medical community, the incidence of COVID decreased some. Yet hospitals were still overwhelmed. Fortunately, the odds of dying from COVID markedly decreased among the vaccinated. The advisory committee continued to meet. As time passed another health issue entered the discussions, the health of souls.

In early spring our elders made the decision to resume in-person worship with live streaming continuing. It was strongly suggested that those attending wear masks. This decision caused a great deal of reflection on my part. After all my responsibility as a physician was to prevent death as much as possible. (Certainly, as physicians, we cannot prevent death but we can at least give people more years with the best possible quality of life). With continued reflection, the obvious dawned on me. Our elders have a similar duty. They want to prevent the spiritual death of anyone.

In conclusion, the psalmist says, *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalms 116:15 ESV)*. I have focused on death. Yet we should, as messengers of God, focus on saints. We should focus on sharing Jesus.



## MCDC Honors 3 Retirees

By Norma Anderson

During the recent Mayfair Child Development Center spring program, MCDC honored Nancy Wilson, Linda Aders, and Janice Slaymaker on their retirement after many years of service.

These ladies not only gave many years of service to MCDC but also to young children in our community. Combined, they have 101 years of service in education!

Nancy Wilson has taught at MCDC for the past 21 years in the young two-year-old's class, while Linda Aders has taught at MCDC for the past 8 years in the older two-year-old's class and Janice Slaymaker has taught in the older two-year-old's class for the past 13 ½ years.

The staff at MCDC honored these ladies with a luncheon and retirement gifts. These three ladies are going to be missed greatly and leave a big gap in our hearts! We wish them well as they retire. May God continue to bless them.



MCDC retirees Linda Aders, Janice Slaymaker, and Nancy Wilson were honored at MCDC's recent spring program

## Mayfair Assistance Helpline

256-704-3384

Mayfair has a helpline for members who may require physical assistance with home maintenance, automotive repairs, or transportation needs. Call and leave a message regarding your needs and you will be contacted for details.

## Mayfair Hosts Walk4Water Event

By Lane Widick

Walk4Water is an interactive fundraiser sponsored by Healing Hands International of Nashville, TN, supporting the "Clean Water" program. Walk4Water, which started in 2007, hosts events all over the country at schools, churches, and other organizations.

Walk4Water brings awareness to the fact that the average distance to walk for clean, usable water in many impoverished nations around the world is upwards of four miles roundtrip. That simply is not sustainable. Walk4Water helps change that by going into local villages and communities and drilling wells for clean water. Since 2001, Healing Hands International has drilled over 1500 clean water wells in over 10 countries.

On Sunday, April 16, the Mayfair Church of Christ participated in its first-ever Walk4Water. There was a half-mile course mapped around the campus, and participants were encouraged to walk as much as they could up to the 4-mile total (8 laps total) so



Mayfair's Walk4Water event raised nearly \$140,000

they could understand further what so many families around the world have to do just to have water to drink in their homes.

Over 300 participants of all ages from Mayfair and the community participated in the walk. After all the fundraising dollars came in, Mayfair's Walk4Water raised \$139,546, which is enough to build 18 wells.