

God Continues To Bless The Work In Baja

By Denton Kimbrough

It is amazing watching God work in the Baja Peninsula. Mayfair has been deeply involved in this work for over 25 years. Over these years, hundreds of our Mayfair brothers and sisters have made the journey to this special place touching the lives of so many.

Mayfair has been blessed unbelievably through these rich mission experiences. And God has blessed the Baja work beyond Mayfair in that now other congregations across the U.S. are partnering in this effort. Over this past year, 19 U.S. groups served over 600 people in Baja. We thank God for this partnering effort to bring Jesus to the Baja people.

It was a blessing to be a part of Mayfair's 2023 Summer Baja trip which included nearly 100 of Mayfair's family members and teens. Seeing our teens serving alongside the teens from San Quintin was awesome. Their hearts were united in the love of Christ which was obvious to all. Watching our families pour out their hearts in service was so encouraging. Because we have been closely involved with the San Quintin church over these many years, we now see each other as family. There is a closeness that transcends both cultural and language barriers.



Mission Team Enroute to Viscaino







In 2023, through Baja missions, over 100 people came to know Jesus and gave their lives to him in baptism. Praise God! With God's help, there are now over 20 congregations of the Lord's church in Baja.

One of those new churches is in Viscaino which is seven hours south of San Quintin. This past August a team of Baja preachers and members, along with a few of us from the U.S., traveled to this newly planted church and taught Jesus to this community, resulting in four baptisms. A mobile medical team was there also to help provide medical relief for the people there. It was again a life-changing trip and experience.

It is so reassuring to see God work and answer our prayers. This is particularly true with the work at Camp Baja, a 12-acre plot of land in the San Quintin valley surrounded by a beautiful lagoon and majestic volcanoes in the background. Camp Baja is a special

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Reflections 2023 - We Give God the Glory

<p>100 + BAPTISMS</p> <hr/> <p>6,943  PATIENTS SERVED IN 3 MEDICAL CLINICS</p> <hr/> <p>PURCHASE OF EYE CARE EQUIPMENT FOR 3 CLINICS (CONFOCAL SCANNING, OPHTHALMOSCOPE - IMAGE OF EYE) \$125,000.00 DONATION OF A FAMILY</p> <hr/> <p> BAJA BROTHERS & SISTERS EVANGELISM & MEDICAL MISSION TRIP TO VIZCAINO. 522 PATIENTS SERVED IN MOBILE CLINIC, 4 BAPTISMS.</p>	<p>19  U.S. GROUPS SERVING IN BAJA WITH OVER 600 PEOPLE</p> <hr/> <p>1,350  PATIENTS SERVED THROUGH 8 MOBILE CLINICS TO CHURCHES</p> <hr/> <p> CAMP BAJA RIBBON CUTTING</p> <hr/> <p>53  COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS</p> <hr/> <p>PROVIDED OVER 1,000 FOOD SETS DURING HURICANE & FLOOD</p> <hr/> <p>PREACHERS & WIVES RETREAT CAMP BAJA</p>
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place that will help meet the needs of the churches in Baja and provide outreach and service opportunities to the community.



Teens from Mayfair and San Quintin at Camp Baja Amphitheater

A gathering pavilion is now complete along with a fully equipped kitchen. Both boys' and girls' dormitories and bathrooms are now complete. This facility is already being used by the churches in Baja. It is a retreat for these families, particularly teens. Only God knows the good that will be done at this special place.

An amphitheater has been erected, providing a wonderful place for devotionals and opportunities to



Elderly members at San Quintin enjoy the Casa Amor ribbon cutting March 6, 2024

Looking to 2024...

<p>COMPLETION AND OPENING OF CASA AMOR (SENIOR ASSISTED LIVING)</p> <p><i>Casa Amor</i></p> <p>FIRST BAJA BIBLE CAMP AUGUST 2024</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE MARCH 16-17 (CAMP BAJA)</p> <p>FALL CONFERENCE OCT 31ST - NOV 5</p> <p>20 GROUPS SCHEDULED FOR 2024</p>
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grow closer to God and one another. This was a huge project, but our God is much bigger. It is a reminder that, with God, all things are possible. We give Him all the glory, honor, and praise for this effort.

In 2024, we are confident that God has great things in store. We know that He will open many doors of opportunity to share Jesus with those who are helpless, hurting, and lost.

This year has already seen one milestone as Casa Amor (Senior Assisted Living) at Camp Baja opened on March 6. It will serve those who are elderly and in desperate need of help. Many of those are widows who have sadly been cast aside and abandoned by their families. Many now live in one-room shacks with cardboard walls and dirt floors.



Camp Baja

Casa Amor is a place where they receive love, care, and at least one hot meal a day. The director who was selected will be a wonderful caregiver to these special people.

There are so many wonderful blessings and opportunities on the horizon for Baja. May God continue to have His loving and mighty hand on us. We look forward to seeing what our God will do in us and through us this next year.

If you have any questions regarding Baja, please feel free to contact me at 256-527-4375 or email me at dentonk@mac.com.

Getting to Know Your Elders

Last month, we began a series of articles to help us get acquainted with our Mayfair elders. This month, we learn about Cliff Mann and Jamie Neidert and their families as each of these men shared with us a little of their history and how they came to be at Mayfair.

Cliff Mann

I was blessed to grow up on a farm in the Owens Cross Roads area. I attended the Owens Cross Roads Church of Christ with my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. I remember my great-grandmother taking the glass communion cups home and washing them each week. All my life I had heard about the love of God and Jesus' sacrifice for us, but it wasn't until a Gospel meeting one summer when the guest preacher made hell seem hotter than usual that I decided to act and be baptized.

After attending Owens Cross Roads elementary school I attended and graduated from Madison Academy. Once I got to Auburn and became active in the Auburn Christian Student Center, I began to understand God's love even more and grew up in my faith. I was blessed to meet my wife, Angela, there as well. We both were privileged to be loved, taught, and mentored by Jim and Mary Brinkerhoff.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication from Auburn University, I earned a Master of Arts in Bible from Alabama Christian School of Religion. I served in the ministry for several years before returning to Madison County to work in the real estate industry. For nearly 20 years, I served the community as a REALTOR. After being helped by so many family and friends, I was elected as Madison County's Tax Assessor in 2014 and took office on February 2, 2015.

Angela and I were married in Angela's hometown of Florence at the Sherrod Avenue Church of Christ

on September 17, 1988. We have two children: Rebecca, who followed in her mother's footsteps as a pharmacist and lives in Moulton with her husband Mitchell Henry, and our one-year-old grandson, Clinton James Henry. Our son, Adam lives in Mobile with his wife, Katie where they both serve on the football staff of the University of South Alabama.

We now live on the farm where I grew up and enjoy raising, training, and riding Quarter horses and helping my dad with some cattle. We have been part of the Lord's work at Mayfair for approximately 26 years.

Angela enjoys reading, sewing, and quilting. Angela along with Randy Fowler and Don Gardner started the Upward Basketball program at Mayfair that ran for many years. She continues to help with many of the ladies' activities and classes.

I have been honored to serve as an elder since 2020 and continue to help lead and teach the Family Class, as well as assist with the Men of God ministry. Mayfair certainly has been and continues to be a blessing and an important part of our family's spiritual life and growth.

Jamie Neidert

My wife Brenda and I grew up in Lawrence County, Tennessee in the town of Loretto, where I was raised in the Catholic church. My folks ran a Seed Cleaning/Feed store there: Neidert Seed Company. Brenda and I met at Loretto High School and were married in 1981 while at the University of North Alabama.

I was blessed to get a graduate teaching assistant position at Vanderbilt University. Brenda worked in the Medical School during those graduate years. We were both searching for spiritual guidance and visited nearly every denomination of "Christian" churches in Nashville.

We had a banner year in 1986 as I finished graduate school and moved to Huntsville for a new job with Thiokol Corporation and Brenda gave birth to

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Cliff and Angela Mann



Jamie and Brenda Neidert

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our son, Lucas! He now lives in Marietta, Georgia with his wife, Sabra, and our two precious grandchildren, Harlan (6) and Selah (3), and works for Honeywell.

With a new soul in our family, we were determined to find a church home. As in Nashville, we visited many churches. We visited Mayfair and heard what we had been looking for - a gospel sermon, preached by Gary Bradley, at a Bible-based congregation. We loved the Bible classes, especially those taught by two men who have since passed on: Paul Kelly and Ken Newlin.

We studied with Dave and Jolene Mundie, and we were both immersed on the same night (September 30, 1988) by Dave and began our walk together. Brenda was very involved in the Children's ministry and teaching. I attended but was not as involved as I now know I should have been, but God had plans for me.

Thiokol began closing the Huntsville plant in 1992, and we who worked in Research & Development were offered positions in Utah, so off we went. We were put to work at the Wasatch congregation, near

Hill Air Force Base. It was a great learning experience for both of us, but especially me. I was installed as a deacon and given lots of invaluable responsibility, while Brenda continued her work. Those were great years working with a strong congregation, set in a beautiful place. We never tired of looking at those mountains.

Our lives changed again in 1995 as I took a job in northern Virginia with Atlantic Research Corporation. We served in the Manassas congregation in various roles, and look back on those experiences with fondness.

In 2002, we finally had the opportunity to return "home," or at least closer than we had been for ten years. I went to work for the US Army as a civilian in the Propulsion Lab. We returned to Mayfair, armed with ten years in two U.S. "mission" points and a seasoned perspective of what church work looks like. Involved in the Small Group Ministry as well as serving as the class coordinator for the Encouragers' Class, I was installed as a deacon. Soon thereafter, Brenda joined the Mayfair staff as Joe Essner's assistant in Involvement. I was called to be a Shepherd in 2020 and have worked with deacon involvement, the Senior Ministry, member involvement, the Encouragers, Sunday evening JOY, and Community Life Groups.

My work as a deacon in congregations all over the U.S. and now my work as an elder have been the most enriching part of my spiritual journey. I have been so blessed with these opportunities because this striving has been both powerful and rewarding. I have tried to share this volunteerism attitude with others in the Body, and I encourage each of you to find a ministry that strengthens you as a disciple of Christ in which to immerse yourself. Look around! There is something you can do and someone you can encourage.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER

Sunday 6:00 AM Early Worship (Room A-104)

Sunday 9:00 AM Family Worship (Worship Center)

Sunday 10:30 AM Bible Classes for all ages

Sunday 5:00 PM Evening Service (Foyer)

Sunday Evening—Community Life Groups (meet throughout the county)

Tuesday 10:00 AM Ladies' Bible Class (Foyer)

Wednesday 10:00 AM Men's Bible Class (Foyer)

Wednesday 1:00 PM JOY Bible Class (Foyer)

Wednesday 4:30 PM World Bible School (M-103)

Wednesday 6:30 PM Bible Classes for all ages

Student Ministry (meet at various times and places)

“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 members age, they are often unable to meet with us due to health issues, but are still near and dear to our hearts. This month, we learn more about one such member, Johnnie Swaim.

Johnnie Swaim

By Joni Swaim

Johnnie Marie (McMurtrie) Swaim was born on September 25th, 1930, in Huntsville, Alabama. She will turn 94 this year.

She was the second daughter out of six children to her parents John and Minnie McMurtrie who lived off Highway 72 West. Her father was an avid farmer, who raised and sold livestock (mainly beef) and food products and her mother was a homemaker. Her parents attended the Berea Church of Christ and the Fanning Heights Church of Christ.

Johnnie had four sisters, Evelyn, Bertie, Lorene, and Jean, and one brother, William McMurtrie. Her brother, William, and his wife and family attended Twickenham Church of Christ where he was a deacon for many years.

She met her future husband William "Bill" D. Swaim, Jr. in 1957 while attending the Central Church of Christ where his mother and father were members. They married on February 1st, 1958, and first lived on Ward Avenue and attended Mayfair Church of Christ on Bob Wallace Avenue. Later their family attended the Memorial Parkway Church of Christ (now known as the Chase Park Church of Christ), but returned to Mayfair in 1988.

Throughout the years, they attended weekly wor-



ship services, as well as Sunday and Wednesday Bible classes. Johnnie helped with Vacation Bible School, communion preparation, showers, and teas. Over the years, she taught children's classes with her youngest daughter, Joni Swaim, while Bill counted the contribution and served communion.

Johnnie had many hobbies including music, exercising, bowling, sewing, and traveling. She began her career in the 1950s, first at Rose Jewelry downtown on the square in Huntsville, before going to work at Redstone Arsenal. She began her 37-year career as a federal civilian employee at Redstone Arsenal, working in the Defense Department for the U.S. Army. She started in Procurement Planning and finished in the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) Project Office. Following her retirement from the federal government, Johnnie continued working as a contractor until 2005, when she and Bill both decided to retire at the ages of 73 and 76. Bill passed away in 2019.

As parents Johnnie and Bill, both believed in loving Godly instruction, talking through misunderstandings, helping with homework, attending any activities whether sports or academic events, and always providing the very best Godly guidance in love for one another and their children.



Bill and Johnnie in their younger days

SSS – What’s That?

By Iris Warren

About two years ago, the Mayfair elders suggested they would like to form a support group for widows and asked me to organize it. As a recent widow, I thought this would be helpful and reached out to Joyce Hall and Trudy Moore, who have contributed tremendously.

At the first meeting, we talked about the purpose of our group. We looked at several scriptures. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, we are told about a God of Comfort and how we learn how to give comfort by being comforted. Our best comfort often comes from having a good listener.

Galatians 6:2 tells us to *"Bear one another's burdens."* By being there for each other, we are indeed bearing one another's burdens.

Hebrews 10:25 describes how we gather to encourage one another. Loneliness can be a major issue and gathering with others can help. We agreed that we wanted to support each other.

We chose a name for our group, SSS, which stands for Sisters Supporting Sisters. Our group includes widows, singles, and singles again. It is designed to give support to women who are alone. We meet monthly for a meal and fellowship. We spend time getting to know others and providing support.

At first, we were meeting in restaurants and often we were given a long table so we could only communicate with the 3-4 people around us. Then we met in the Garden Room at Mayfair and noticed we could get to know more people sitting at the round tables. We need to get acquainted with people, so we feel comfortable sharing our concerns and helping others. Mayfair provides a meal six times per year and an anonymous donor provides six meals, so we are now able to meet at Mayfair and have a meal provided each month. We sometimes have a speaker to give a brief devotional, but we desire to get to know others so we can be of support.

We know it is particularly difficult in those early days and months of being alone. It is extremely helpful to be with others who understand and can give support or just a listening ear when we need it most.

Early on, we decided it would be nice to share some resources we had used in the community and found helpful. These included painters, roofers,



Sisters Serving Sisters

plumbers, etc. that someone in the group had used and thought did good work and treated customers fairly. We have a list available we can share if you would like a copy. Some members of our group are currently working on a booklet that would be helpful for new widows. The plan is to share this with new widows soon after their loss.

We have a list of 155 ladies in this group, but we are trying to reach others as well through email and online announcements. If you are in this group or know of someone who is, please share this information. We would love for you, or them, to join us. We meet the fourth Tuesday of each month, January through October at 11:30 AM in the Garden Room at Mayfair. In November and December, we meet on the second Tuesday at 11:30 AM in the Garden Room.

Please feel free to contact me or others in our group if we can be of help. If you plan to come to a meeting, please let me (Iris Warren) know by the Sunday before the meeting, so we can prepare for the number of ladies who will attend. If you have any questions, or suggestions, or need more information, please call the church office at 256-881-4651 and they will notify me.

Mayfair Assistance Helpline 256-881-4651 or 256-704-3384

Mayfair offers a helpline for members who require physical assistance with home maintenance, automotive repairs, or transportation needs. Call the church office at 256-881-4651 during office hours, or 256-704-3384 after hours and weekends, and leave a message regarding your needs and you will be contacted for details.

I Will Dwell in the House of the LORD Forever

By Dick Savage

At the close of one of the most familiar passages in the Bible, David triumphantly announced, *“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever”* (Psalm 23:6 NIV).

Being in God’s presence meant everything to David. Since he shared such a close relationship with the Lord, David could picture himself as a permanent resident in God’s house, basking in His constant goodness, love, and care every day throughout eternity. And because death held the promise of eternal life in God’s heavenly kingdom, David looked forward to the intimate and never-ending fellowship of dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

In 2 Samuel, Chapter 7, we read that David was troubled because he lived in a fine palace while God lived “out there in a tent.” David planned to build a fine palace in which God could reside. However, God would not allow David to build a house for Him. God, however, said He would build a house for David.

The “house” David wanted to build for the Lord was a temple. The “house” the Lord promised to build David was a posterity, a dynasty of kings. Although David was not permitted to build the temple, the Lord did build the house He promised David. The kings of Judah were descendants of David, as was the King of Kings—Jesus the Christ—who, interestingly, promised to help all who follow Him obtain “mansions” in the world to come (John 14:1–3 KJV).

The word “dwell” in Psalm 23:6 (NIV) means “to inhabit or live in.” The house of the Lord is a term often referring to the Tabernacle, the temple, or the place of worship (as in Psalm 122:1 NIV). But here in Psalm 23:6 (NIV), the phrase speaks explicitly of “a dwelling house, palace, or local residence of a deity.”

David wanted to abide in the presence of God forever. In the presence of God is the believer’s true home. *“Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house,”* declared David in Psalm 65:4 (NIV). And again, in Psalm 27:4 (NIV), we read of David’s passionate and singular pursuit: *“One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze*



on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.” To dwell in the house of the Lord forever was David’s deepest longing.

Like David, the apostle Paul was sure that nothing in this life, not even death itself, could separate him from the loving presence of God: *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38–39 NIV).

To dwell in the house of the Lord forever also suggests living with an attitude of a heart that expresses constant praise and worship. In Psalm 34, David exclaimed, *“I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises”* Psalm 34:1 (NLT). Another psalmist declared, *“What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises”* (Psalm 84:4 NLT).

According to Psalm 84, *“A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else.”* The verse continues: *“I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked”* (Psalm 84:10 NLT). *“Praise the LORD!”* says another psalm. *“Let all that I am praise the LORD. I will praise the LORD as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God with my dying breath”* (Psalm 146:1–2 NLT).

The good things that God provides for us in this life are merely a foretaste of what awaits us in heaven. A glorious future day is coming when all the redeemed of the Lord will gather around the Lord’s table in His eternal house. In heaven, as we dwell in the house of the Lord forever, we will enjoy full, uninterrupted fellowship with God.

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When our time in this earthly tent is complete, we *“will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6b)*. We will see the psalmist David dwelling there. Our family in the Lord will be there, too. Best of all, we will see Christ face to face. He will wipe away every tear, and we will worship Him forever (Revelation 21:3-4)! We are strengthened with joy day by day knowing that we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. I’m reminded of an old hymn:

When All of God’s Singers Get Home

Lyrics by Luther G. Presley
© 1937 by Stamps-Baxter Music, Co.

What a song of delight in that city so bright,
Will be wafted 'neath heaven's fair dome.
How the ransomed will raise
Happy songs in his praise,
When all of God's singers get home.
As we sing here on Earth songs of sadness or mirth,
'tis a foretaste of rapture to come.
But our joy can't compare
with the glory up there,
When all of God's singers get home.
Having overcome sin, hallelujah amen,
Will be heard in that land 'er the foam.
Every heart will be light,
and each face will be bright,
When all of God's singers get home.
When all of God's singers get home,
Where never a sorrow will come.
There'll be no place like heaven my home,
When all of God's singers get home.

I surely want to be there. Don't you?

Ethics in the Hospital

By Butch Kinzer

I began serving on Huntsville Hospital's Ethics Committee at its inception in about 1985. I served as co-chair or chair of the committee for over 25 years.

The committee does not make decisions, except the setting of policy. We advise about ethical issues within the hospital when requested by a patient, family member, nurse, or doctor.

Advising involves ascertaining the pertinent medical issues, the family's position on the situation, and the ethical question involved.

Over the past 40 years, I have seen fewer ethical questions brought before the committee. The preponderance of the cases in recent years pertains to end-of-life decision-making. Who can decide on allowing a Do Not Resuscitate order to be written? Who decides if a feeding tube can be placed? The subtext I see in some consults is – “Can the committee make that decision.” In the area of who can



make such a decision, Alabama Law is clear.

In statute, there is a hierarchy. Spouse or parent is first depending on marital status. Then siblings if no children and so on for around ten possible decision makers. The last on the list is a hospital ethics committee. Even when it comes to the bottom of the list the State Department of Human Resources must weigh in on the decision. My experience at Huntsville Hospital is that when DHR is informed, they defer to the hospital. In my tenure on the committee, I only know of one situation where the committee decided end-of-life.

Most often case managers and social services work hard to locate a decision-maker. When they are una-

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ble to locate one, they petition the Probate judge to appoint a guardian, which can typically be accomplished within 24 hours in Madison County.

Recently, we had two requests for consultation which called for an opinion on the medical care provided. The answer was The Ethics Committee DOES NOT GIVE OPINIONS ON MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED. (The Medical Staff has processes in place to monitor and evaluate the care provided).

Then what guides the opinions rendered? That guidance comes from what is referred to as the four principles of medical ethics-autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence.

Autonomy requires that a patient be allowed to make their own decisions without coercion or coaxing. There is a duty on the part of the provider to give pertinent information regarding the benefits and risks of any procedure, surgery, medication, or treatment plan that is being recommended. When a person is unable to make those decisions then a healthcare proxy is burdened with making those decisions in the manner, they perceive the patient would wish.

The second principle is justice. An aspect of justice is that the burdens and benefits of new or experimental treatments must be distributed equally among all groups of society.

A violation of this principle, as well as that of autonomy, and "do no harm," occurred from 1932 to 1972 when the United States Public Health Service and the CDC conducted a study in which a group of African American men were untreated and observed for syphilis over those 40 years.

The concept of justice also pertains to the equal distribution of healthcare. Sadly, the cost of innovative technologies and medications creates issues of justice.

The third principle is beneficence which demands that health care providers look to only doing good for each patient. This principle also demands that healthcare providers maintain, develop, and hone their skills for caring for patients through continual training and reading, striving always for the net benefit to patients.

The fourth principle of medical ethics is "do no intentional harm," which is self-explanatory.

All these principles have nuances and challenges brought about by changes in society and innovation. These principles are constrained by state law, in my opinion.

In my deliberations, I have realized that I have used scripture as my guide. Always consider the greatest and the second greatest commands. "Love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your mind" Matthew 22:37 (NET) and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39 NET).

The one area where I still have difficulty pertains to the perception of quality of life. There are great differences of opinion of what is quality life. Some view being bedridden with little or no awareness of their surroundings as an acceptable quality. Others would not view that as quality. I am in the latter group, as are most physicians I find. This is where autonomy prevails, in my opinion.

I will close with a case scenario: Patient B has hepatitis C. They are hospitalized with total liver failure and admitted to ICU. B requires tremendous supportive care. With liver failure, he is unable to make clotting factors. There is excessive bleeding requiring many units of blood and platelets. The blood exposes nurses to hepatitis C. The nurses continue delivering the needed care. The outlook is extremely poor.

The family declines the request to transition to comfort care and a DO NOT RESUSCITATE order. They have stated they are waiting for a miracle. When the ethics committee convened to give an opinion, a wise member of the committee observed that the only way to know if a miracle would occur was to transition to comfort care. Sadly, for the family, a miracle did not occur that day. Just another day in the life of the Huntsville Hospital Ethics Committee.



God's Adopted Children

By Jamie Neidert

Most of you know all about the family you grew up in, as well as where your people originated: Who they were, where they immigrated from and emigrated to; what they did; who was born when; and who died when; where the family cemetery sits; and who lies there; who married whom; and how many twins there were in your family, going back generations.

Well, I did and I didn't. From my earliest memories, my parents (Clarence and Martha Neidert) told me how special I was, that I was more precious to them than any birth (or natural or blood) child. They couldn't have children and adopted me as "their best Christmas present ever," in December of 1960. I was born in Memphis and lived my first six months in the care of the nuns at St. Peter's Home for Children on Poplar Avenue (now part of the St. Jude campus).

All of us babies slept in cribs that were suspended from the ceiling by chains. I was adopted at six months. Those at St. Peter's had been there long enough for them to worry about my little soul, so they "baptized" (sprinkled) me in August of 1960. Just to be sure, my parents had me "christened" again later at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Loretto, Tennessee.

Growing up I forgot I was adopted. I was Mom and Dad's son, pure and simple. Only when someone mentioned it – or I heard the word "adopted" – did it ever enter my mind. I never understood when people would mention that some child or other "acted the way they did" or "gave their parents trouble" because "THEY WERE ADOPTED!" I also thought – and still do – that this was a lame excuse – and easy scapegoat – for poor behavior. I had good parents and a good life. I can remember a time when I overheard a man say to my dad, "he's not your real son." I was furious (but stayed quiet) and was amazed (even more so now) that Dad handled it gently, and soothingly. I asked him later about it. He dismissed it as that man's ignorance. That was it and that was all. As Clint Eastwood said, "... the less secure a man is, the more likely he is to have extreme prejudice."

¹³ *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* ⁴ *For he*



*chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for **adoption** to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves (Ephesians 1:3-6 NIV).*

*"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption** to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15 NIV).*

Our adoption by God, through our baptism and redemption in those waters, makes us all sons and daughters - redeemed children of our Creator God. We are told in Romans 8 that through this adoption, we need not fear anymore. What a wonderful message!

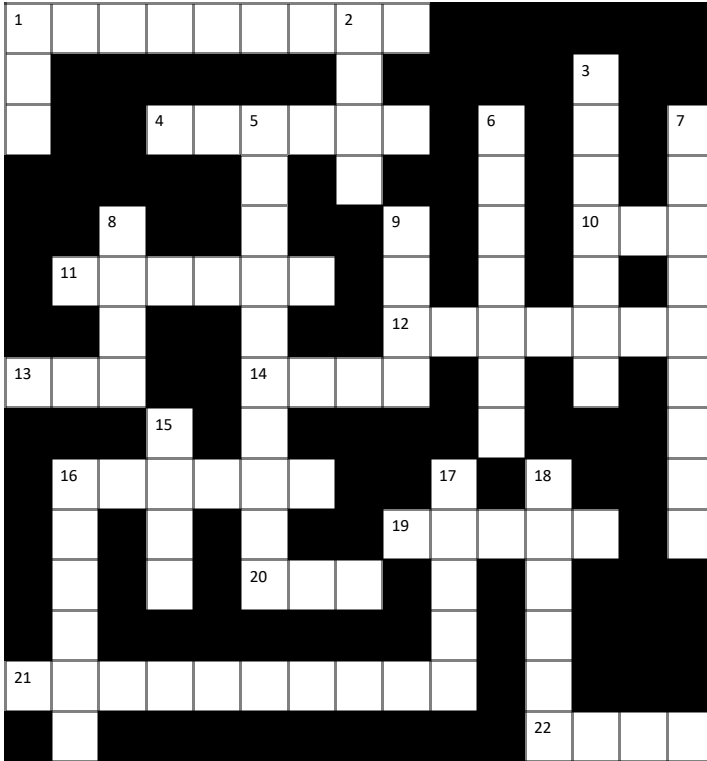
It is interesting to notice those in God's Word who were also adopted: Moses (as a prince of Egypt), Esther (by Mordecai) in Esther 2:15; and Jesus himself (by Joseph). What some people considered a stigma, I came to consider an honor. I am appreciative to have been chosen by the loving couple in Middle Tennessee who loved me and, most of all loved each other – a most wonderful example and gift to me. They prayed for children, and God blessed them with me. However, I was the one truly blessed.

There is more to my journey as I have now found some of my blood relatives, several of whom are brothers and sisters with us in the Lord's Church. It has been a rich and wonderful blessing to meet and know them. Even with this additional "family" that I now know, I will always be a Neidert, and the son adopted by a couple who loved me dearly. For me, it is a vivid earthly glimpse of our relationship with our heavenly Father, how much He loves us, and how much He wants us to be His.



Search the Scriptures: Sermon on the Mount

Test your knowledge of the scriptures with this crossword puzzle. All clues and words are taken from the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7. Book, chapter, and verse references are provided in brackets. Search the scriptures to find the answer. Answers are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV). The answer key is found on the last page.



ACROSS:

- 1 "Jesus taught as one who had _____" [Matthew 7:29].
- 4 "So whatever you wish that _____ would do to you, do also to them" [Matthew 7:12].
- 10 "but if your ___ is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness" [Matthew 6:23].
- 11 "Enter by the _____ gate" [Matthew 7:13].
- 12 "Love your _____ and pray for those who persecute you" [Matthew 5:44].
- 13 "do not be anxious about your life, what you will ___ or what you will drink" [Matthew 6:25].
- 14 "The wise man built his house on the _____" [Matthew 7:24].

- 16 "You will recognize false prophets by their _____" [Matthew 7:15-16].
- 19 "You cannot serve God and _____" [Matthew 6:24].
- 20 "If your right eye causes you to ____, tear it out and throw it away" [Matthew 5:29].
- 21 "...lead us not into _____, but deliver us from evil" [Matthew 6:13].
- 22 "The foolish man built his house on the _____" [Matthew 7:26].

DOWN:

- 1 "____, and it will be given to you" [Matthew 7:7].
- 2 "but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, ____ to him the other also" [Matthew 5:39].
- 3 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall _____ the earth" [Matthew 5:5].
- 5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the _____" [Matthew 6:5].
- 6 You therefore must be _____, as your heavenly Father is _____ [Matthew 5:48].
- 7 "Do not lay up for yourselves _____ on earth" [Matthew 6:19].
- 8 "You are the ____ of the earth" [Matthew 5:13].
- 9 "____, and you will find" [Matthew 7:7].
- 15 "Blessed are the ____ in heart, for they shall see God" [Matthew 5:8].
- 16 "...your _____ knows what you need before you ask him" [Matthew 6:8].
- 17 "Blessed are those who _____, for they shall be comforted" [Matthew 5:4].
- 18 "do not throw your _____ before pigs" [Matthew 7:6].

"Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying..."
Matthew 5:1-2 ESV

SENIOR LIFE

MAYFAIR CHURCH OF CHRIST

Senior Life Sunday

By Don Gardner

Sunday, March 10, 2024, Mayfair celebrated its first Senior Life Sunday, honoring the older members of the congregation. The morning worship service was led by several of the older men in the congregation with Senior Life Minister Keith Hodges delivering the morning message taken from Philippians 2:1-13.

Senior Life is the combined efforts of many ministries at Mayfair which either involve or serve our senior members. The effort is an outgrowth of the “Mayfair Towers” ministry which began years ago when the congregation met on Whitesburg Drive. The ministry focuses on the overall senior adults’ ministry at Mayfair.

Senior Life Sunday culminated with a potluck lunch and fellowship which was well attended. Mayfair is blessed to have so many senior members who set an example for others in both word and deed.



SERVE ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE
GALATIANS 5:13

CORRECTION

In the January 2024 issue, a quote identified Monday Meals as a service project of the Tuesday Ladies’ Bible Class. That statement was incorrect. This ministry originated with and is still maintained by the Mayfair Classics Class. We are happy to make that correction.



Senior Life Potluck Lunch

ANSWER KEY:

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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