



CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

MONTHLY UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2026

2 BISHOP REID

6 HEART2HEART

13 PASTORAL CARE

17 PRAYER

There Are No More Phone Booths: Communicating the Unchanging Gospel in a Changing World

By Bishop Trevor Reid

If you've watched any of the recent Superman movies, you may have noticed something missing: there are no phone booths for Clark Kent to change into Superman. Why? Because phone booths no longer exist.

When I watched the 1978 Christopher Reeve version of Superman with my son, he asked me, "What's that thing Clark Kent went into?" Phone booths were already becoming obsolete by the time he was born. To him, the phone booth was almost as unfamiliar as the superhero himself.



That simple moment reminds me of something important for those of us who communicate the Gospel: our world is changing, and we need to pay attention. As ministers of the Gospel, we have a responsibility to know the Gospel, understand how it has transformed our lives, and faithfully communicate that truth and testimony to others. But the challenge is not simply understanding the Gospel of the Kingdom. We must also understand the context of the people with whom we are sharing it. Tim Keller in his book *Center Church* described contextualization as communicating the Gospel in a way that meaningfully engages the context, worldview, language, and experiences of those receiving the message.

Jesus modeled this beautifully. He used fishing illustrations, agricultural images, stories, questions, and examples drawn from the ordinary lives of people in the communities where He ministered. He communicated eternal truth in ways people could understand because He understood the world in which they lived. Len Tang said, "Ultimately Jesus translated God for us and set the pattern for how the Church must contextualize the Gospel for the world." We need to think carefully about the language, illustrations, stories, and metaphors we use to communicate God's grace to people today.

Our world has changed dramatically, not only over the past 100 years, but even within the last 30 years. The ways people communicate, process information, understand authority, form relationships, and make sense of the world are continually changing. What was once common knowledge may now require explanation. What once connected people to an idea may no longer carry the same meaning. That means we must think deeply and listen carefully, just as Jesus did, about the people we are seeking to reach with the message of His Kingdom.

Following Christ is not easy, but understanding the Gospel should not be unnecessarily difficult. Our calling is not to change the Gospel to fit our culture. The Gospel does not need to be reinvented, softened, or compromised. The truth of Jesus remains unchanged. But we do need to continually ask ourselves: Is the way we are communicating the Gospel helping people hear and understand the unchanging truth of Jesus? We cannot assume that the words, illustrations, methods, or metaphors that communicated effectively to one generation will automatically communicate effectively to the next. So let's learn to listen to our world. Let's understand the people God has placed around us. Let's learn their language, their questions, their fears, their hopes, and the stories they live by. Let's pay attention to the things that shape their understanding of the world—and then faithfully connect those places to the timeless truth of the Gospel. Because contextualization is not about making the Gospel different. It is about making sure the Gospel can be heard.

The phone booth is gone. The Gospel is not. So let's faithfully carry the unchanging message of Jesus into a changing world, and make sure that when people encounter the Gospel, they encounter the Gospel itself, not a cultural translation they can no longer understand.

[1] Keller, Timothy. *Center church*, 44.

[2] Tang, Len, and Charles E. Cotherman, eds. *Sent to Flourish*, 142.



Church Governance

The Role of a Church Board



WHAT IS THE BOARD SUPPOSED TO DO?

So, our churches are incorporated. Now what? Once a local church is incorporated, it has a Church Board of Directors responsible for the corporate responsibilities of the church. This raises an important question: *What is the Board actually supposed to do?* The answer matters because a healthy church needs clarity about the different responsibilities of the *Board, the Pastor, staff, and ministry leaders*. When those roles are unclear, boards can drift into micromanagement, pastors can become frustrated by unnecessary oversight, and ministry leaders can find themselves navigating multiple layers of authority. The goal is not to create distance between the Board and ministry. The goal is to create clarity, trust, accountability, and healthy partnership.

What Does It Mean for the Board to Hold Corporate Powers?

According to Section 5.3.3 of our church bylaws, the Board is legally authorized to:

"Manage the affairs, funds, and property of the corporation; and buy, sell, mortgage, pledge or encumber any church property and incur related indebtedness as outlined in the Bylaws."

This gives the Pastor and Board an important responsibility. The Board is the body legally authorized to act on behalf of the church as a corporation in matters related to its *legal, financial, and property responsibilities*. The pastor, as chairman of the Board, and the Board have a fiduciary and corporate responsibility to make sure the church is properly governed, financially responsible, adequately protected, and operating within applicable state and local laws and the requirements of the Church of God of Prophecy. But this does **not** mean the Board is supposed to manage every aspect of church ministry. There is an important distinction between corporate governance, spiritual leadership, and ministry operations.

Three Areas of Responsibility

1. The Board — Corporate Governance

The Board is responsible for the **legal and corporate health of the church**. This includes:

- Insurance and liability protection.
- Financial oversight and accountability.
- Establishing and approving the church budget.
- Oversight of church property.
- Major financial commitments and indebtedness.
- Appropriate corporate records and practices.
- Applicable legal and denominational requirements.
- Governance, accountability, and risk oversight.

The Board asks:

- *Are we legally protected?*
- *Are we financially responsible?*
- *Are we properly insured?*
- *Are we caring for the church's property and resources?*
- *Are we fulfilling our legal and denominational responsibilities?*

These are governance questions.

2. The Pastor – Spiritual Leadership

The Pastor has a unique role in the church because the pastor is both the chair of the board and has an equally important responsibility of shepherding the congregation, casting and communicating vision, providing spiritual leadership, and overseeing the care and ministry of the church totally distinct from the role of chair of the board. The Pastor in their capacity as spiritual leader leads people, develops leaders, communicates the mission and vision, and ensures that the ministries of the church are aligned with that mission. The Board should not become a substitute for pastoral leadership. A Board that begins determining the details of sermons, discipleship methods, outreach strategies, worship practices, or day-to-day ministry direction is moving from corporate governance into pastoral leadership.

3. Staff and Ministry Leaders – Ministry Execution

Staff and ministry leaders are responsible for carrying out the vision and ministry of the church. They lead ministries, organize activities, recruit and train volunteers, care for people, conduct outreach, and execute ministry under the leadership of the Pastor. They are also responsible for ensuring their ministries operate according to the policies and requirements established by the church. This creates a healthy flow:

- The Board provides governance and oversight.
- The Pastor provides spiritual leadership and direction.
- Ministry leaders execute the ministry and care for people.

These responsibilities work together; they are not competing responsibilities.

Governance Without Micromanagement

One of the greatest challenges for a church Board is knowing the difference between oversight and management. Oversight asks:

“Do we have the right systems, policies, resources, and safeguards in place?”

Micromanagement asks:

“Are you doing every detail exactly the way I would do it?”

Consider children's ministry. The Board has a legitimate responsibility to make sure the church has appropriate insurance and risk-management practices. But that does not mean Board members should check every Sunday to determine whether children's ministry has the correct number of adults in every classroom. That moves the Board from governance into ministry management.

Instead, the Board ensures that appropriate policies, insurance, and risk-management expectations are established.

The Pastor ensures ministry leaders understand those expectations.

The children's ministry leadership implements the policies, trains volunteers, and operates the ministry accordingly.

If there is a serious problem or pattern of noncompliance, the Board may appropriately become involved. But the Board should not manage the ministry in order for the church to be properly governed. The Board establishes the guardrails. Leadership drives the vehicle.

The Role of a Church Board

The Same Principle Applies to Finances

Finances provide another important example. The Board has significant responsibility for the financial health of the church. It should provide oversight of the budget, income and expenditures, financial controls, major financial commitments, stewardship, and legal and denominational requirements. But the Board does not need to approve every ministry purchase or tell every ministry leader how to spend every dollar allocated to their ministry. Once the budget has been established and approved, the Pastor and appropriate ministry leaders should be empowered to execute the ministry within that approved framework.

The Board should ask:

- Are we operating within the approved budget?
- Are appropriate financial controls in place?
- Are we receiving accurate financial reports?
- Are we being good stewards of our resources?

The Pastor and ministry leaders then take responsibility for using those resources effectively to accomplish the ministry.

The Board Protects the Church; It Does Not Replace the Pastor

Board members love the church. They see needs, have ideas, and want the church to succeed. Those are wonderful qualities. But passion for the church does not automatically mean responsibility for managing every area of the church. If a Board member sees a struggling ministry, declining attendance, or a need for new outreach, the response should not automatically be, *"We need to tell the leader what to do."*

A healthier question is:

"What are you seeing? How can we support you? Is there anything the Board needs to address from a governance, financial, legal, or resource perspective?"

The Board should be a resource to the Pastor, not a second pastoral team.

Trust and Accountability

Good governance requires accountability, but it also requires trust. The Board should trust the Pastor to lead the ministry. The Pastor should trust the Board to fulfill its corporate responsibilities. Ministry leaders should trust the Pastor and Board to provide clear expectations, resources, protection, and support. Healthy governance creates clear responsibility with appropriate accountability.

A Board does not measure its effectiveness by how many ministry decisions it makes. It measures its effectiveness by whether the church is well governed, well protected, financially responsible, and appropriately supported so its spiritual leaders and ministry teams can fulfill the mission of the church. The Board does not exist to run the church. The Board exists to govern the corporation so the church can fulfill its mission. When the Board understands its role, the Pastor understands theirs, and ministry leaders understand theirs, the church can move forward with greater trust, clarity, and effectiveness. People are empowered to lead. Leaders are held accountable. And the church can focus its energy on the mission God has given it.

— September 2026 —

Heart2Heart Ministries

A Wellspring for Women in Ministry



When Discipleship Starts in the Garden

Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42

When was the last time you prayed like Jesus prayed?

Not the polished prayer you pray over a meal, or the one you pray out loud from the front of a room, but the kind that meets you in Gethsemane — anxious, honest, wrestling, and finally yielded (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42). Jesus carried the weight of the world on his shoulders in the garden. As we look at his time in Gethsemane and compare it to how we spend our own prayer time, we have to accept it: if we are to be like Jesus, we must pray like Jesus. This prayer journey is sometimes emotional, overwhelming, and scary at times, but in order for God's will to be realized in our lives and his glory to shine, it must be done.

Here's the piece I want to sit with you in:

The women we disciple are not going to learn to pray like Jesus prayed by hearing us talk about prayer. They will learn it by watching us actually go to the garden.

They will learn through a “come and see” invitation when we are going through the dark night of the soul. Jesus didn't go to Gethsemane alone. He took Peter, James, and John with him, and asked them to stay awake with him. Discipleship is letting the women we are leading see us wrestle before God. As women who disciple other women into the likeness of Christ, we cannot skip past this. That's what makes Gethsemane so instructive for those of us who lead, mentor, and disciple other women.

Jesus Was Anxious

"My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death." When was the last time you were overwhelmed with anxiety, so worried about a situation that only God could solve? How long did it take you to release that anxiety to Jesus? **Jesus' anxiety comforts us during our own times of prayer**, when we are anxious for God to fulfill his purpose in our life. Sometimes, like Jesus, our anxiety is mixed with both joy and sorrow, in that we must go through waiting or suffering before God's glory is revealed.

Don't despise the wait. Endure it. The God-man himself had to wait on God's timing for all things to be made complete. Similarly, every woman you are pouring into needs to hear this. Tell her that. Don't despise the wait. Endure it.

Jesus Was in Agony

As the night went on, we see Jesus moving from anxiety to agony. He rebukes his disciples twice for not being able to keep watch with him. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" The human side of Jesus expected his friends to carry his burden with him by joining in prayer. They were the ones closest to him, and he trusted them. He invested in them. They should have understood what he was feeling and labored with him in prayer.

Many of us have been through a similar experience. We've been disappointed when our spouse, brother, sister, or best friend does not devote more time to pray for us. Sometimes we have not interceded for someone in their time of need. You know what I mean: we get a text message or see a social media post and respond with "praying" or a praying hands emoji, but don't actually take the time to stop and pray deeply for the need. Discipleship puts us on both sides of that agony: the one who needed to be watched with, and the one who fell asleep on someone who needed you.

Jesus says, "Watch and pray, so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Today **we can be comforted by the fact that Jesus understands**. He's been there, and he's there to meet us in prayer in our time of need, if we acknowledge our weaknesses before God — just like he did before his Father. That is what we owe the women watching us: not the appearance of never being weak, but the example of bringing our weakness to God.

Jesus Yielded to the Father's Will

Our time with the Father, our Gethsemane, should be a place of yielding, cleansing, purification, and even death: death of our own will. It is a wrestling to win over the flesh. It is not until we die that Christ can live in us. Jesus was finally able to submit because he knew the Comforter could come.

Gethsemane means "olive press," and that is exactly what happened to Jesus there: pressure, until what remained was surrender. Discipleship that doesn't lead someone toward surrender is just information transfer. Our job isn't to produce women who know more verses. It's to walk alongside women who are being pressed into "not my will, but yours" — and to let them watch us get pressed, too.

I'm reminded of experiences we've had as parents, having to stand by and listen to our children cry out to us, "Mommy, help me!" but not being able to run to their rescue for their own benefit, growth, and learning. The Father did that with Jesus in the garden. And Jesus, in turn, does that with us. Discipleship will sometimes require us to do the same with the women God has entrusted to us — to resist the urge to rescue them from the process and instead pray with them through it.

Prayer is a safe place where we can agonize in truth, empty ourselves and allow God to do an inner transformation of our hearts. Eventually, we can just leave our worries, our hurts, disappointments and even betrayals at the foot of Jesus and let Him do the rest.

Reflection Questions



1. Where do you tend to hide your own “Gethsemane” moments from the women you disciple, and what would it look like to invite one of them to watch you pray through it instead?
2. Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to watch and pray with him, and they couldn't. Who have you asked to watch and pray with you lately? Did you ask at all?
3. Discipleship modeled after Gethsemane moves someone toward yielding, not just informing. What is one area where God is pressing you toward “not my will, but yours” right now?
4. Think of a woman you are discipling or want to disciple. How might you invite her into your prayer life this week, rather than only your teaching?

A Prayer to Pray This Week

Father, thank you for Jesus, who did not pray from a distance but let his closest friends see him wrestle. Teach me to disciple the way he did – honestly, prayerfully, without pretending my faith has no agony in it. Give me the courage to invite other women into my real prayer life, not just my polished testimony. And where I am being pressed right now, press me all the way to yielding, so that my life might lead someone else closer to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

*With you in the Word and in prayer,
Aileen*



Lead Me to Calvary

King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;

Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

5 Practical Ways to Make Our Church More Welcoming to Special-Needs Families

By Ingrid White

Because every family deserves to encounter God's love in a place that truly feels like home.

For families with special-needs children, simply getting to church on a Sunday morning can require heroic effort. The last thing they should face is an environment that feels unprepared or unwelcoming.

The gospel calls us to be a house of prayer for *all* people. Here are five practical, actionable ways to make sure our churches live up to that calling.

1 CONDUCT AN HONEST ACCESSIBILITY WALK-THROUGH

Before we can welcome families, we must make sure they can get in the door and navigate once inside. Walk through your facility with fresh eyes, or better yet, invite a family with a special-needs child to walk through with you.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Check that ramps are functional and doorways are wide enough for wheelchairs and strollers.
- Evaluate your sensory environment: are the lights too harsh? Is the music too loud during worship?
- Create a designated "calm room" or sensory-friendly space where children who are overwhelmed can decompress with soft lighting, noise-canceling headphones, and fidget tools.
- Ensure restrooms are accessible and include changing tables if possible.

2 START A SPECIAL-NEEDS MINISTRY: EVEN A SMALL ONE

You don't need a massive budget or a full staff to begin. What you need is intentionality and a willingness to learn. Start with one classroom, one trained volunteer, or even a buddy system where a trusted teen or adult pairs with a special-needs child during children's church.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Identify one passionate coordinator — it could be a parent, a retired teacher, or a church member with a heart for inclusion.
- Offer simple training sessions on interacting with children who have autism, Down syndrome, ADHD, or other developmental differences.
- Develop individualized plans for each child. A short intake form asking about triggers, communication preferences, and comfort strategies goes a long way.
- Don't forget the siblings — they often carry invisible burdens and benefit from feeling seen and supported too. Ministry to special-needs families is not about perfection; it's about presence.

5 Practical Ways to Make Our Church More Welcoming to Special-Needs Families

3 COMMUNICATE WELCOME BEFORE THEY EVER ARRIVE

Many special-needs families visit a church's website or social media before they ever step foot in the building. If they can't find clear, reassuring information, they may never come at all.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Add a dedicated section to your church website, welcoming special-needs families and outlining what accommodations are available.
- Post photos of your accessible entrances, sensory room, and children's ministry spaces so families know what to expect.
- Offer a contact number or email for a designated person who can answer questions before a family's first visit.
- Include a line in your weekly bulletin and announcements that explicitly name your commitment to inclusion; words like "All children, of all abilities, are welcome here" carry more power than we realize. When families know what they are expecting and prepared for, the anxiety of that first visit drops significantly.

4 EQUIP AND EDUCATE THE CONGREGATION

A welcoming church is not built by a committee alone — it requires a culture shift. If a child with special needs makes noise during worship and receives stares instead of smiles, no program or policy can overcome that.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Preach and teach on the theology of inclusion. Remind the congregation that Jesus Himself consistently sought out those whom society marginalized (Mark 10:13-16, Luke 14:12-14).
- Host a Sunday or midweek workshop on disability awareness, inviting local professionals or special-needs parents to share their experiences.
- Train greeters and ushers to warmly welcome families with special-needs children and to direct them to the appropriate resources without making them feel singled out.
- Encourage members to practice simple acts of grace, offering a smile instead of a stare, a helping hand instead of a judgmental glance. Culture is built one interaction at a time. Every congregation member is an ambassador of welcome.

5 Practical Ways to Make Our Church More Welcoming to Special-Needs Families

5

BUILD GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING

Programs and policies matter, but what keeps a family coming back is the sense that they are known, loved, and valued not just accommodated. The deepest form of welcome is relationship.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Ask special-needs parents what *they* need, and then actually listen. Don't assume you know.
- Check in on caregivers, who often experience burnout, isolation, and grief. A simple phone call, a meal delivered, or an offer of respite care can be life-giving.
- Include special-needs families in the full life of the church, not just in a designated ministry, but in worship, fellowship, service, and leadership where appropriate.
- Celebrate milestones. When a child takes a step of faith, participates in a program, or simply has a great Sunday, name it and rejoice in it. When families feel that the church sees their child as a gift rather than a challenge, you have created the most powerful form of welcome there is.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Building a welcoming church for special-needs families is not a project to be completed; it is a posture to be maintained. It requires humility, listening, and a willingness to grow. But the reward is immeasurable: a community that more fully reflects the heart of a Savior who said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:14).

Every family that walks through our doors is an opportunity to live out the gospel. Let us make sure our doors and our hearts are wide open.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." Psalm 133:1

September Birthdays

3	Nounoude Lafontant
5	Vanesa Canterbury
12	Sunny Tinsley
12	Ruth-Ann Ignacio
14	Gia Roberts
15	Erica Jean
15	Donnette Neal
17	Sonia Sutherland
23	Barbara Lynn
23	Wilma Whitten
26	Ethlyn Webb
30	Barbara Green



Birthday Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Today we celebrate the gift of Your servant. Thank You for her faithful heart, her commitment to Your calling, and the many lives she has touched through her ministry. As she begins another year, fill her with renewed strength, wisdom, joy, and peace.

May Your favor surround her, Your presence sustain her, and Your grace empower her for every assignment You have prepared. Bless her family, her health, her leadership, and her walk with You. Let this new year be marked by spiritual growth, divine opportunities, and abundant blessings.

May she continue to shine as a reflection of Your love and faithfulness.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you." — Numbers 6:24-25 (ESV)



Pastoral Care Letter

September, 2026



From my heart to yours...

Dear Pastoral Care Leader,

Next month is a very special event that we celebrate as

“Pastor Appreciation Month.”

We are given the opportunity to say “Thank You” to those who have made a difference in your life and those of your congregation. Pastors have a divine calling to perform the Lord’s work here on earth, and we can make a difference in them by doing our part to let them know just how much we love and appreciate all that they do for us.

I am sending you a list of ideas for your use, and hopefully you will find it helpful as you give honor to the pastor that God has given you.

I want to say a great big “Thank You” for all you are doing to show the love of God to all of our men and women pastors all over this wonderful state! You rock!!!

Blessings to You,

**Frankie S. Dotson
State Pastoral Care Director**



Ideas for Pastor Appreciation Month

Clueless! That's how many churches feel as they contemplate how to express gratitude to their cherished leaders for Pastor Appreciation Month, each October. Here are 10 suggestions to get the creative juices flowing:

- **Lots of Letters** - On the Sunday before Pastor Appreciation Day, distribute stamped envelopes addressed to the pastor. An instruction note invites each church member to write and mail a personal note of encouragement and appreciation to the pastor during the week.
- **Award T-Shirt** - Special order a "Best Pastor in _____" T-shirt, cap, or plaque, and present it with flowers.
- **Original Art** - Laminate bookmarks created by the children in your church, featuring their art and signatures. Allow kids to present the bookmarks to the pastor personally.
- **Church in a Frame** - Prepare a beautifully framed photo or painting of the church building. Even better, take a group photo of the church members in front of the building. Use extra-wide matting and ask every church member to sign the mat before adding glass.
- **Helpful Commentaries** - Purchase a full set of Bible commentaries. Allow various groups, such as Bible classes, committees, or church organizations, to present one book of the set, individually wrapped with their personal notes of appreciation on the inside pages.
- **Video Presentation** - Create a presentation of photos and videos of the pastor in action during the past year. Set it to music and play it as a pre-service video.
- **Public Thanks** - Take out a full-page ad in your local newspaper, featuring a photo of your pastor and a declaration of your church's love and appreciation. Even better, add every member's signature on the ad.
- **Office Makeover** - Do a surprise office makeover, with the pastor's wife's input, of course. Consider fresh paint, updated decor, new furniture, and even a computer or technology upgrade.
- **Favorite Things** - Think of one small thing your pastor enjoys, such as M&Ms, fishing lures, coffee, etc. Ask each member to bring that one item on Sunday, i.e., one bag of M&Ms, any size. Supply extras for guests or members who forget.
- **30 Days of Appreciation** - Use an October calendar to schedule volunteers for a month-long schedule of surprise treats. Each day of the month, the pastor will receive a surprise token of appreciation from a church member, committee, or group within the church. The tributes can vary widely. Some ideas include: a balloon delivery, a shoe shine, an apple pie, or a gift certificate. After a whole month of pleasant surprises, won't your pastor feel appreciated.

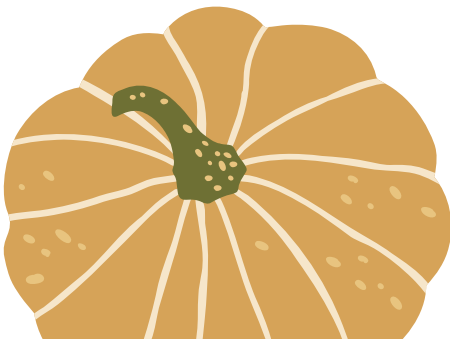
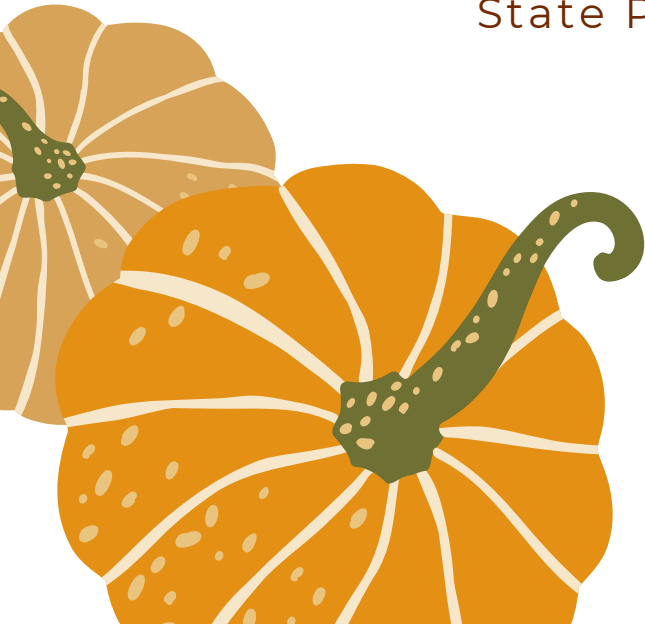
October is
PASTOR
Appreciation Month

October is set aside to give honor and appreciation to the special people in our lives that we call “Pastor.”

Please show them how much they mean to us! Shower them with love and care, so they have no doubt as to how much they are appreciated.

God bless you and thank you for taking care of your Pastor!

Frankie S. Dotson
State Pastoral Care Director



September Drive

HOME MISSION DOLLAR DAYS

*September is here, so that means
it's time for **Home Mission Dollar Days**.*

*We are receiving a special offering to aid District churches that
are in need.*

*Please do your best to encourage each congregation in your District
to participate. Remember 100% of your donations will go to help
your District churches, so every dollar helps!*

***All funds will be
kept and used
within your
District only.**



FRANKIE S. DOTSON
STATE PASTORAL CARE DIRECTOR



September 2026 Prayer Focus

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

5:45–6 AM EASTERN TIME (MONDAYS)

CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 848-220-3100

CONFERENCE ID: 1917013#



For our children and youth:

9/7—to be as close to God as possible

9/14—an outpouring of the Holy Spirit

9/21—bear good fruit and share their gifts

9/28—to walk in God's call for their life