PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

ILL AT HOME & RECOVERING:
Tommy Ashworth, Jennifer Byington, Joel & Rhea Calloway, Aaron Carroll, Kathy Carver, Dana Caywood, Susie Coates, Ricky Copas, Ron Edwards, Toni Gibson, Ruth Gott, Mark Herndon, Susan Hudson, Grant & Nancy Lawson, Glenda Livesay, Beth Tilley McCurry, Patty Melton, Evangeline Roberts, Kelly Robinson, Lula Rogers, Barbara Smith, Christine Smith, Opal Vaughn, Robert Walls, Daphine Winegar

SHUT-INS & CHRONIC ILLNESS
Marlene Allen, Patsy Cumbow, Tony & Linda England, Vonda Gardner, Eddie McDavid, Billie Orrick, Betty Sproles

NURSING HOME/ASSISTED LIVING & REHAB

Peggy Harber	Gray Life Care Center
Charlotte Lemons	Wexford House
Hagan Bowen	Encompass

NON-MEDICAL PRAYER NEEDS
The LOST, BS2, Our Country, Our Schools, Bob & Celeste Gailey, George Kasibante & Uganda Orphange.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Weekly Requirements	$ 7,026.67
Undesignated – December 29, 2024	$ 3,861.00
Savings – December 29, 2024	$ 1,150.00

3	Waymon Ferrell	12	Susan Hudson
4	Russell Ratliff	14	Robin Collins
6	Tina Shanks	18	Jim Wood
6	Mike Trent	23	Tommy Ashworth
7	Alton Trent	23	Stacy Miller
11	Marlene Allen	29	Carolyn Coates

Happy Birthday to each of you.

Calvary Baptist Church
1238 Pine Street – Kingsport, Tennessee 37664
423-245-9157
http://www.calvaryofkpt.org

Pastor: Dr. Donnie C. Brannen
Associate Pastor/Music, Ed: Rev. D. Mikel Caywood
Youth Director: Harrison Ihrig
Secretary: Shirley Sullivan
Pianist: Debbie Johnson
Keyboard: Lemuel Mixon
Drummer: Jeff Sturgill
Webmaster: Dana Caywood

The Cross and Compass (USPS 974-380) is published every other week by Calvary Baptist Church, 1238 Pine Street, Kingsport, Tennessee 37664-2432. Periodicals Postage Paid Kingsport, Tennessee. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Cross and Compass, 1238 Pine Street, Kingsport, TN 37664-2432.

The Cross and Compass

Matthew 28:19-20

Vol. I No. 1 **January 6, 2025**

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Morning Worship (Sanctuary)

TUESDAY SCHEDULE
12:00 Noon Sr. Adult Bible Study & Lunch (CH)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE
6:00 PM Adult Prayer Meeting (CH)
Konnect Kidz & CBC Youth Activities
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal – Nursery provided

2025 Offering Envelopes are available in the Church Office. If you need a box of numbered envelopes for the new year, please contact Shirley at the church office. Envelopes will only be distributed by request.

REFLECTIONS OF 2024

I shared the following at our business meeting on December 18.

In Mark 6:31, after a particularly strenuous season of ministry, Jesus told His disciples to *"Come...apart to a desert place and rest."* Someone once said that you can either come apart or fall apart. In our go-go-go culture, whose motto seems to be "If it ain't broke, you ain't working it hard enough," rest is often looked upon as laziness. Little wonder that burnout runs rampant.

To be honest, 2024 is a year that in many ways I will not remember kindly. It got an early start last December and never let up for the rest of the year. Some of the stressful issues my family and I have faced the past year you know about, some you don't, and some we're not at liberty to talk about.

Among other things, in the span of a few week's time, Heidi and I went from empty nesters to full housers. Chris had to move back home after being away for a time. Elizabeth and the boys had to move in with us for a time before returning to Cincinnati. Caleb resigned the church in SC at the end of April and moved here. Connor and Daniel have spent a number of months here with us. I've been told that anytime you add or subtract someone from the home, there is stress involved. To be honest, there were times I wasn't sure who was coming or going at any given time, and the circumstances behind all of those moves were extremely stressful.

The boys' medical issues this year have been a mix of triumph and tragedy. We are hoping that the long stays at Cincinnati Children's Hospital are done, that they will all be back here before February, and that they won't have to go back at all until summer. Connor's surgery is scheduled for New Year's Eve.

Early in the year, I had my heart implant replaced. What I thought was going to be an easy procedure with a quick recovery turned into a difficult several weeks.

Chris was in an automobile accident last Spring. Thankfully, he was not injured. It could have been much worse.

Heidi took at bad fall in early summer. Her recovery has been difficult, and in many ways, is still ongoing.

It was during the summer that I became aware that the stress of the year, and more so the ongoing stress of the last three years, was weighing heavily on me. Stress, like concussions or sprains, is cumulative, and the buildup was moving toward critical mass. Among the symptoms I began noticing were:

* Fatigue that wasn't relieved by rest and that took me out of my exercise routine.

* Difficulty in making decisions.

* Difficulty in focusing, resulting in way too much TV and way too little reading.

* Frequent and worsening bouts of insomnia.

* Increasing issues with high blood sugar and peripheral neuropathy.

* Depressive moods (rare for me) that came and went without explanation.

* Compassion fatigue and emotional numbness.

* Lack of margin; the feeling of not being able to handle even one more thing.

Recognizing that the warning lights were flashing on my dashboard, Heidi and I made plans to use some vacation time around my conference week in September to take an extended time of several weeks off. Unfortunately, issues with the kids' care meant that we were needed and made it impossible to be away. I did get away to the Fresh Oil Gathering in Chattanooga. That conference week was a refreshment to my soul, and probably gave me the boost I needed tomake it through the rest of the year.

Thankfully, unlike many, if not most, pastors, my work here at the church has never been a source of great stress. I am so blessed with the people and ministry I have at Calvary, and am rarely stressed by my work here.

I tell you all this to let you know that after I preach on Sunday, I am planning to take several weeks away from the pulpit. Heidi and I will leave next Monday, December 23 to go to Cincinnati to spend Christmas with the kids, and then will return on December 30. Daniel, Titan and Caleb will also be returning then to give Connor time, space, quiet and undivided Mom-attention to recover from his surgery. I am looking forward to having them return with us, and to having the whole clan back together here soon. I am especially looking forward to spending time with Titan, who has been away the most this past year.

I will not be taking this time completely off, and will be in and out of the office once we return from Cincinnati. I am hoping to use this time not simply for rest, but for prayer, rejuvenation, reading, re-visioning, and establishing or re-establishing some goals and habits for the new year. I hope to come back renewed to go forward with purpose in 2025 instead of just slogging through. Pray that this time will be valuable time, not just down time.

On December 29, Harrison will be preaching. Caleb will fill the pulpit on January 5, and on January 12, Jimmy Phipps, the chaplain of the Christian Motorcycle Association, of which Russell Ratliff is a member, will bring the message. I plan to return to the pulpit on January 19 with the celebration of the Lord's Supper that Sunday, and we are planning to celebrate the ordinance of baptism on January 26.

Numbers 6:24-26,

Bro. Donnie