

a voice for women in baptist life

# Vocare

VOLUME 7, NO. 1, WINTER 2013

## IN THIS ISSUE

2

Refresh the Dream:  
The BWIM Annual Gathering

3

We Have This Treasure:  
A Sermon by Nancy Sehested

4

Baptist Women in Ministry News

5

Creating a Church Culture in Which  
Women's Voices are Valued

6

Why Baptist Women in Ministry Matters

7

A Church That Encourages: Northminster  
Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi  
by Courtney Allen

8-9

Baptist Women in Ministry  
Supporters, 2012

10

A Day in the Life by Lauren Brewer

11

Remembering to Celebrate:  
Baptist Women in Ministry at Thirty  
by Pam Durso



**BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY**  
*advocating • connecting • networking*

P. O. BOX 941294, ATLANTA, GA 31141-1294  
404-513-6022

Follow BWIM on Facebook & Twitter.



## REFRESH THE DREAM

JOIN Baptist Women in Ministry for a  
**CELEBRATION OF THIRTY YEARS!**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2013**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA**

WORSHIP at 7 p.m. and ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION at 8:30 p.m.



NANCY SEHESTED  
*Preacher*



SUZII PAYNTER  
*Special Guest*

## OUR VISION

Baptist Women in Ministry will be a catalyst in Baptist life, drawing together women and men, in partnership with God, to illuminate, advocate, and nurture the gifts and graces of women.

# REFRESH THE DREAM

## THE BWIM ANNUAL GATHERING ON JUNE 26, 2013



### Maya Angelou, "Inaugural Poem"

Lift up your eyes upon  
The day breaking for you.

Give birth again  
To the dream.

Women, children, men,  
Take it into the palms of your hands.

Mold it into the shape of your most  
Private need. Sculpt it into  
The image of your most public self.  
Lift up your hearts  
Each new hour holds new chances  
For new beginnings.

In 1982, with hopes for a brighter future, Nancy Sehested began dreaming of ways to support and encourage Baptist women called to ministry. Joining her in those dreams were thirty-three women, who in March 1983 gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, to plan the formation of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry. The inaugural meeting for the new organization was held on June 11, 1983, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, just prior to the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting. At that June gathering, women and men came together to talk honestly, to strategize, to fellowship, and to worship. They heard a passionate sermon, "We Have This Treasure," preached by Nancy Sehested (see page 3 for an excerpt), and they officially formed what is now Baptist Women in Ministry.

On June 26, 2013, Baptist Women in Ministry will gather for the thirtieth time and again hear the preaching voice of Nancy Sehested, who is now co-pastor of the Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville, North Carolina, and serves as a prison chaplain at Marion Correctional Institution. During our worship time, Elizabeth Flowers, assistant professor of American religious history at Texas Christian University and author of *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power since World War II*, will share stories from BWIM's history. Communion will be led by Jane Hull, interim pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Birmingham, Alabama, and Emily Hull McGee, minister to young adults at Highland Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Special guest for worship will be Suzii Paynter, new executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Atlanta, Georgia.

The theme of worship, "Refresh the Dream," is inspired by Maya Angelou's 1993 inaugural poem. Worship begins at 7:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, and will be followed by an anniversary reception.

As always, this annual worship gathering will be a special time of good music, insightful preaching, and unforgettable fellowship, and one of the highlights of our gathering is the recognition of the annual Addie Davis Awards recipients. Be watching the BWIM website and the BWIM Facebook page for more details.



Top to bottom: Jane Hull,  
Emily Hull McGee, and  
Elizabeth Flowers

# WE HAVE THIS TREASURE

## A SERMON BY NANCY SEHESTED

Sisters and brothers, here is my testimony. May God bless and use these words as is needed and fitting. We live in the great in-between time. We are ready, but still waiting. We are called, but not confirmed. We are trained, but not employed. We are willing, but not able. Pastors tell us their congregations are not yet ready and able to accept us. Congregations tell us their pastors are not yet ready and able to accept us. We are to our convention like Paul's early Gentile converts.

We live in the great in-between time. Our calling is clear, and our gifts are manifest. But the desert is a severe, unforgiving place. Many have already parted company, taking on other careers in other denominations. Are there many among us who have not entertained such options? For those who have moved on, we bid God-speed. Some of us feel that if we had any sense, we would do the same. But we remain. It is no special virtue, no special righteousness. Stiff upper lips will not do.

We cannot fully understand why we stay, although all of us would have some partial reasons. The deepest reason is not fully fathomable. The best we can say is that this is where we are called to be. And that is enough.

We live in the great in-between time. We hope for brighter futures, assured of nothing but God's continued fidelity to undergird our spirits and nurture our souls. We see glimmers of light here and there, shining in the darkness, and we celebrate and cultivate it. But we know that light shines from a great distance. It will be a while yet before the whole room is lit up.

We live in the great in-between time. I propose that we make a covenant with each other. That we covenant to care for each other, to listen to each other, to be open to each other's encouragement and counsel. That we stay in touch with each other, allowed each other the freedom to make different choices, that we burn our bitterness as a sacrifice to the Lord. That we confess to each other, treat each other with gentleness. That we open our communion to brothers as well as sisters. That we pray for each other, challenge each other, rejoice with each other, weep with each other. That we covenant to meet again with each other, for mutual support and correction, for study of the scriptures with each other, for singing spiritual songs and hymns together.

Why? Because we have this treasure. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Vessels that need filling and refilling again and again. Vessels filled to spill over with healing waters to a hurting world. The treasure is not buried. It is here among us and in us.

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Struck down, but not destroyed. Let the light shine in our hearts. Let the light shine on out of darkness. For we have this treasure.

*Excerpted from "We Have This Treasure," 2 Corinthians 4:7, the sermon preached by Nancy Sehested at the inaugural meeting of Baptist Women in Ministry, June 11, 1983. The entire sermon may be found in THIS IS WHAT A PREACHER LOOKS LIKE: Sermons by Baptist Women in Ministry.*



*Nancy Sehested, 1983*

### BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM

*Courtney Allen*  
callen@fbcdalton.org

*Judith Bledsoe Bailey*  
judith@bledsoebailey.com

*Gwen Brown*  
gwen@cornerstonechurchgrayson.org

*Emily Hull McGee*  
Emily@HBCLouisville.org

*Kristen Muse*  
kristen@hbbsc.net

*Stacy Pyle*  
stacy.cbfoke@gmail.com

*Carolyn Staley*  
Cstaley@phblr.com

*Meredith Stone*  
meredith.stone@texasbaptists.org

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*Pam Durso*  
pamdurso@bwim.info

#### **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

*Aimee Day Yeager*  
aimeeyeaeger@bwim.info

# BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY NEWS

## BWIM Blog

The BWIM blog in November 2012 featured a daily posting titled “A Day in the Life.” Thirty Baptist women ministers shared about the activities and involvements of one day from their life, while also telling about ways in which they saw God at work in the midst of a busy ministry day. Read the blog written by Lauren Brewer on page 10, and then read the other blog by visiting [www.bwim.info/blog/](http://www.bwim.info/blog/). You will be inspired by the stories of these gifted women ministers!

## Ordination Resources

Check out the BWIM website for ordination resources (<http://www.bwim.info/ordination-resources/>). You will find orders of worship, litanies, charges, and poems that are helpful in the planning ordination services.

## What Are You Reading?

An ongoing collaborative group led by Devita Parnell and Pam Durso gathers each month for conversations about women and Baptist life. The group meets via phone conference call and/or online through live meetings. Plan to attend and invite your friends and colleagues.

The 2013 conversations will feature interviews with authors of books of interest to Baptist women. Get these on your calendar.

### 2013 Meeting Dates and Times (EST)

**Katherine Willis Pershey**    **Wednesday, March 6**    **1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.**  
*Any Day a Beautiful Change: A Story of Faith and Family*

**Kelli Walker-Jones**    **Monday, April 1**    **10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**  
*Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Poser of Narrative in Clergy Leadership*

**Deborah Kolb**    **Monday, May 6**    **10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**  
*Her Place at the Table: A Woman's Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success*

**Elizabeth Flowers**    **Monday, June 3**    **10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**  
*Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power since World War II*

To join the conversation, email Pam Durso at [pamdurso@bwim.info](mailto:pamdurso@bwim.info) for more information.

## Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching, 2013

For seven years now, Baptist Women in Ministry has sponsored Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching, asking that Baptist churches participate in this special emphasis by having a woman preach during the month of February. This annual event has been a deeply significant source of joy and discovery for many women and churches.

BWIM offers resources for Martha Stearns Marshall Month, including a bulletin insert, a certificate, and a hymn, and

this year, BWIM is proud to provide a four-minute video that tells the story of Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching. Show this video to your congregation, share it with your friends and colleagues, and send it to neighboring churches. Use the video to encourage others to participate. Use the video as a means of celebrating the God-given gifts and preaching abilities of Baptist women. You can find the video at <http://vimeo.com/bwim/marthasternsmarshall>.



# CREATING A CHURCH CULTURE IN WHICH WOMEN'S VOICES ARE VALUED

by Pam Durso

In establishing Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching (MSM), the BWIM Leadership Team's dream was to find churches in which young and starting-out Baptist women ministers could preach. We had heard so many stories from women who never had opportunities to preach other than in their seminary classrooms—and we were hoping that churches would invite college and seminary women into their pulpits.

As the idea developed and then came into being, we also saw MSM as an opportunity to call churches that were “not yet open” to women as pastors or perhaps not even open to women preaching at all to take a step and invite a woman. And in the ensuing years we have come to realize that MSM serves as a change agent for our Baptist culture—and so many remarkable stories have unfolded.

We have had numerous churches whose male pastors were hesitant to invite a woman into their pulpit but were encouraged by MSM to take that step, and some of those churches have participated every year since. Having a woman in their pulpit is now longer unusual or controversial.

I am optimistic enough to believe that more churches are beginning to embrace the idea that women are gifted and graced for ministry and that those churches, when their pulpit is open and they are searching their next pastor, will be open to calling a woman. But I am realistic enough to know that the progress is slow in Baptist life—and I know that real change takes time and continued encouragement. So what can churches do once the February emphasis is over? How can Baptists work to bring change to their churches? How can you be an advocate for the leadership and ministry of women in your local congregation? How can you effect change in your church with regard to women in the pulpit but also with women in leadership roles within your church?

Next steps are important, and an important next step is to ask women to preach NOT just during MSM. For churches that have “broken the ice” and had a woman preach for the first time, they can invite a woman to fill the pulpit when their pastor is on vacation or needs a pulpit supply. In 2010, Jim Dant, who was then pastor of Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon, Georgia, pledged to do just that. Every Sunday he was out of the pulpit for a full year, he asked women to preach.

Another significant next step is for male pastors to make their support of women ministers public and visible. They can include stories about women ministers in their sermons and blog about women in ministry. They can make sure photos of the women church leaders are included in media pieces. Visibility matters in our culture, and moving women from invisible to visible leaders/preachers/ministers has a powerful influence on churches. Last year, Taylor Sandlin, pastor of Southland Baptist Church, San Angelo, Texas, blogged about his church's involvement in MSM and then blogged several other times during the year about women in ministry. His blogs are helping to create a welcoming culture in his church and community.

Another great next step is to move the story of Martha Stearns Marshall outside the church walls—and use technology and social media to get the word out. Last year Don Flowers, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina, produced a You Tube video for his church, introducing them to MSM Month and telling them about the woman who would be the preacher for the day. His video was posted on the church's Facebook page and shared multiple times. That kind of verbal and visual support of women preachers is an excellent use of twenty-first century communication.

One of the most important next steps is to for pastors to be advocates for women who are called and gifted. Last year, Derik Hamby, pastor of Randolph Memorial Baptist Church in Madison Heights, Virginia, invited a young college student, a “child of their church,” to preach for MSM Month, and then he realized that she would not have many preaching opportunities so he began asking his pastor friends and colleagues to open their pulpits to her. His advocacy on her behalf has given her experiences she would never have had, and Derik is working to bring change not only in his own churches but in churches in his area.

Seeing the passionate support of women ministers, learning about the creative ways of offering encouragement, and knowing that so many are working to create welcoming church cultures is making a difference! I would love to hear your story—what is your church doing so that women are able to use all their gifts?



Top: David Hull  
Bottom: Kathy Gore Chappell

## SUPPORT BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

As has been true for many years, BWIM provides our resources (our newsletter, e-newsletter) to any and all who request them. There are no membership fees. Through all these efforts, BWIM continues to advocate for women ministers and to connect women ministers with one another and with churches. We are grateful for your prayers, words of encouragement, and contributions as we do this work.

You can give online at [www.bwim.info](http://www.bwim.info) or send in a contribution to Baptist Women in Ministry, P.O. Box 941294, Atlanta, GA 31141-1294.

# WHY BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY MATTERS

Baptist Women in Ministry matters greatly because having Baptist women in ministry matters greatly. I am so thankful that Pam Durso and Baptist Women in Ministry are taking us from where we are to where we need to be.

I have watched the work of BWIM very closely. My wife, Jane, is a minister and a recent graduate of McAfee School of Theology. She continues to receive encouragement, support, and counsel from BWIM as she seeks a place in pastoral ministry. My daughter, Emily Hull McGee, is a minister to young adults at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky and serves on BWIM's Leadership Team. Both of these women who are very dear to me have benefited from the ministry of BWIM. So have many other colleagues and friends in ministry.

As far as I am concerned, encouragement seems to be the reason BWIM matters most. That encouragement moves in two directions. Women ministers are encouraged and helped by BWIM. Pam Durso is someone every minister should have as her mentor and friend. But the encouragement is not just for clergy—it is also for the churches. With emphases like the Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching, BWIM encourages churches to break from their routines and have a woman preach. Our churches need this kind of encouraging.

Baptist Women in Ministry does matter. So keep up the great work!—*David Hull is pastor of First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama.*

As I grew up in Opelika, Alabama, I was shaped as a person and Christian by a strong working mom and by the creative dedicated women who taught me in Sunday school, Vacation Bible School and missions organizations. The overarching message that came to me from all of these Christian women was “Find out what God wants you to do, then, do it!” And so I did. I am thankful to have received their encouragement to pursue God's call to ministry. Imagine my surprise when, through the years, I met people who did not share that philosophy—especially as related to women in ministry.

Like those women of my childhood, Baptist Women in Ministry is an encouragement to me. BWIM also challenges women to “Find out what God wants you to do, then, do it!” During the past thirty years, BWIM has served as a support and resource for women who are being called out for vocational service in local church congregations, missions, non-profits, chaplaincy, divinity schools, and social ministries. BWIM provides this important work that results in the training up of good leaders like LeAnn Gunter Johns, Andrea Dellinger Jones, Ruth Perkins Lee, Emily Hull McGee, Kristen Muse, Meredith Stone, and the list continues.

You too can be an encourager of women to listen and respond to the call of God, and you can be an encourager by supporting the work of BWIM and by giving financially to the cause of women in ministry.—*Kathy Gore Chappell is the leadership development coordinator for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.*

# A CHURCH THAT ENCOURAGES: NORTHMINSTER BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

by Courtney Allen

I am a child of the church. But I am a child of a particular church: Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. Northminster shaped, formed, and molded my life in significant and countless ways. The image of the worshiping church that I grew up in was one in which every Sunday both women and men led in worship. Each time the ministerial staff and deacons processed down the center aisle, a dynamic group of men and women walked past my pew. **From my earliest days, my life and sense of the church has included all of God's people, regardless of gender.**

I was dedicated as a baby, baptized as a child, and ordained as a young woman by this congregation of God's faithful people, but it was only in my teenage and college years that I began to realize the uniqueness of my family of faith. In observing churches different than Northminster, I began asking, "Why is it you say women cannot be called to gospel ministry? Would God really exclude fifty percent of the world's population from ministry? What does church look like without the inclusion of women's giftedness in worship and all aspects of the life of the church?" Questions such as these and their oft-received responses from those outside my community of faith were not consistent with my own experience of God, the church, or the gospel. In the great cloud of witnesses at Northminster, the gifts of sons and daughters fulfilled the mission of the church, and for the consistent, almost organic practice of encouraging the gifts of all God's people in the church, I am grateful.

Northminster Baptist Church is a congregation that has not only welcomed and affirmed ministry by women through words, but also through its deeds. In the early 1980s, the church elected the first female deacon chair

in Baptist life in the state of Mississippi. Of the seven people whom Northminster has ordained to gospel ministry in its forty-six year history, five are women. Northminster has had at least one woman on its ministerial staff for as long as I can remember. Additionally, this community of faith for years has been faithful in its financial support of Baptist Women in Ministry. Each month a portion the church's denominational relations dollars is sent directly to BWIM. This consistent and dependable support provides resources and opportunities for congregations as well as for women called by God to ministry.

I do not know what my life would look like had I not grown up in a congregation like Northminster, a place that nurtured the love of Jesus into me and affirmed me as both a child of God and woman called to minister to God's people in the world. Had my life and vision of the church not been so deeply imprinted with images and experiences of the giftedness of women in roles of ministerial leadership, I hope that God's call might still have found me. But I cannot be sure. Such a call would certainly have been harder to hear, envision, and respond to without the presence of Northminster in my life.

Today, I serve as minister of community ministry and missions at First Baptist Church, Dalton, Georgia, a great congregation that affirms my call and ministry. In my ministry role, I am supported, encouraged, nurtured, and connected by the work of Baptist Women in Ministry. For these many gifts and experiences, I continue to be grateful.

*Courtney Allen is minister of community ministry and missions at First Baptist Church, Dalton, Georgia. She serves on BWIM's Leadership Team.*



Top to bottom: Courtney Allen; Northminster Baptist Church; Current Northminster ministers Lesley Ratcliff, Jill Barnes Buckley, Amy Finkelberg; and Northminster members in action.

# WITH MUCH THANKS

## TO BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY SUPPORTERS, 2012

### CHURCHES

Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson, SC  
Central Baptist Church, Newnan, GA  
Cornerstone Church, Grayson, GA  
Farmville Baptist Church, Farmville, VA  
First Baptist Church, Austin, TX  
First Baptist Church, Frankfort, KY  
First Baptist Church, Goldsboro, NC  
First Baptist Church, Gretna, VA  
First Baptist Church, Madison, NC  
First Baptist Church, South Boston, VA  
First Baptist Church, Sylva, NC  
First Baptist Church of Williams, Jacksonville, AL  
Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown, KY  
Hayes Barton Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC  
Meadow Heights Baptist Church, Collinsville, IL  
Memorial Baptist Church, Buies Creek, NC  
Northhaven Baptist Church, Norman, OK  
Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS  
Northside Baptist Church, Clinton, MS  
Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA  
Pintlala Baptist Church, Pintlala, AL  
Providence Baptist Church, Charleston, SC  
Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC  
Randolph Memorial Baptist Church, Madison Heights, VA  
Second Baptist Church, Liberty, MO  
University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, MO  
Wake Forest Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

### FOUNDATIONS

The Baugh Foundation  
Christian Missions Concern  
Grant Me the Wisdom Foundation  
Ministers and Missionaries Benefits Board

### ORGANIZATIONS

Academy of Preachers  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina  
Smyth & Helwys Publishers, Inc.

### SCHOOLS

Central Baptist Theological Seminary  
Gardner-Webb University Divinity School  
Hardin Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology  
Wake Forest University School of Divinity

Baptist Women in Ministry is not a member-based organization but instead provides its newsletter and other resources to all who request them. BWIM's Leadership Team greatly appreciates these churches, organizations, and individuals that have supported our work!

If you or your church would like to honor and thank a minister on your staff in a public and tangible way, send a contribution to Baptist Women in Ministry and include the minister's name.



## INDIVIDUALS

Sheri Adams  
Mary Ahn  
Lloyd and Libby Allen  
Nancy Ammerman  
Gerald Arnold  
Randal Ashcraft  
Patricia Ayers  
Judith Bledsoe Bailey  
Harold Bass  
Libby Bellinger  
Doris Blackwell  
Carolyn Blevins  
Tammy Abee Blom  
Betty Jean Brannan  
Katrina Brooks  
Caralie Nelson Brown  
Gwen Brown  
Kristina Brown  
Charles and Diane Bugg  
Gary Burton  
Eileen Campbell-Reed  
Susan Cauley  
Ka'thy Gore Chappell  
Renee Chapman  
Agnes Church  
Reba Cobb  
Delores Cooper  
Gail Coulter  
Carolyn Hale Cubbedge  
Beth Davis  
Taryn Deaton  
Ellen DiGiosia

Deneise Dillon  
Pam Durso  
Griselda Escobar  
Amy Finkleberg  
Sue Fitzgerald  
Betsy Flowers  
Pam Foster  
Keith Gammons  
Robert and Anne Gardner  
Neita Geilker  
Smith Gibson  
Perry Ginn  
Bill Gunter  
Genie Hargrove  
Ircel Harrison  
Karen Hatcher  
John Haun  
Craig Henry  
Diane Eubanks Hill  
Linda Hill  
Holly Hollman  
Dalen and Shari Jackson  
LeAnn Gunter Johns  
Joseph and Frances Jones  
Sheree Jones  
Sue Kinzer  
Joe LaGuardia  
Diane Lane  
Linda Lewis  
Leslie Limbaugh  
Deborah Loftis  
Angela Lowe  
Terry and Joan Maples

Molly Marshall  
Gloria Martin  
Jerry and Adell Martin  
George Mason  
Juanita Massey  
Carolyn Mathis  
Rebecca Husband Maynard  
Nancy Stanton McDaniel  
Emily Hull McGee  
Christy McMillan-Goodwin  
Connie McNeill  
Doug Murray  
Kristen Muse  
Anne Neil  
Carol Palmer  
Stephanie Patterson  
Faith Perkins  
Roger Pittard  
Bill and Ruth Pitts  
LeDayne and Tom Polaski  
Morgan Ponder  
Alicia Porterfield  
Bo Prosser  
Melody Pryor  
Stacy Pyle  
Kyle and Amy Reese  
Brittany Riddle  
Helen Riley  
Gail Roberts  
Mac and Lorita Robinson  
Royce Rose  
Anthony Roza  
Ro Ruffin

Katrina Salter-Wood  
Robin Sandbothe  
Nikki Scholfield  
Ellen Sechrest  
Paula Settle  
Sarah Shelton  
Tamara Smathers  
Layne Smith  
Pam Smoot  
Dennis Staley  
Robert Stephenson  
Maria Stinnett  
Meredith and James Stone  
Robert and Ellen Strickland  
Paul and Tambi Swiney  
Virginia Taylor  
Cynthia Thomas  
Bill and Leta Tillman  
Nancy Tuck  
Tonya and Jeff Vickery  
Brent and Nancy Walker  
Naomi Walker  
Rebecca Wall  
Mark and Rebecca Wiggs  
Laura Willis  
David and Ann Wilson  
Ouida Wyatt  
Joyce Cope Wyatt  
Baxter Wynn  
Charles Yarbrough  
Brett and Carol Younger

---

## GIFTS MADE IN HONOR OF INDIVIDUALS

Charles and Diane Bugg  
*In honor of Pam Durso*

Terry and Joan Maples  
*In honor of Wakie Paganelli*

Doug Murray  
*In honor of Kelley Garris*

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Lauren Brewer



Today I darted across the road behind our house, crossed the perpendicular street, and made it to the bus stop in time to catch number 22, which is always on time. I walked another fifteen minutes through the Denver cold to Earthlinks, my morning work site.

We started the day, like any other good day, by brewing coffee. From there it was on to setting up our workshop in preparation for the fifteen to twenty-five homeless, or previously homeless, participants who would soon be arriving. I gathered supplies to press flowers from our garden, to decorate glass vases, and to make lotion bars and lip balm with beeswax from our own hives. Then I got started making breakfast—*my* creative outlet for the morning.

We get a random assortment of food donations weekly from a retired couple who trucks around expired or wilted food gleaned from area grocery stores. Sometimes we have little to work with, and sometimes we have a lot—but

we have breakfast either way. Today I grabbed some potatoes from the truck, a little garlic and some butter and started sautéing. We hunted around, mixed and matched, and artfully arranged on platters until we had a warm and nutritious breakfast for our participants.

After breakfast I listened as a young participant read our week's short reflection. Often it is my job to find and read the reflection, but today I sat and listened. I admit that the depth of response, the connections, and the vulnerability shown by our participants during our reflection time surprises me still. It is partially these deep moments of reflection and community that have sustained me.

From there it was a blur—I helped measure ingredients for the lotion bars, I made sure there were enough pieces of cardboard to press the flowers, I helped funnel some of our participants into the activities that they could best succeed in, and I listened to the stories of whoever wanted to tell one—until it was time to clean up and have a quick lunch.

After lunch it is back to the buses! I took the 44 downtown alongside a couple of our participants where I switched to the 15 (which is notorious for many different reasons). I walked a block to St. Paul Lutheran Church where I work each afternoon. One of the main functions of my position there is to manage our rental, shelter, and prescription assistance program. Each time we are open we can financially help four, maybe five, people—and I often have to tell the other twenty or more who come that *no, there's no money for them today*.

Today I was a host and sat with a man as he waited for his number to

be called—he was number five and was waiting it out in case our money stretched a bit further. We chatted about the weather, about my father who had recently had heart surgery, about life in general. Later in the conversation this easygoing man casually told me that he had AIDS. His previous statements on the gift that is life took on more weight.

Today I did what I could. We offered five people finances to help them avoid eviction or to cover just one more week of their shelter fees. I offered the rest of our guests referrals to other agencies, a listening ear, and a bologna sandwich. Often the stories weigh on me—the man, the same age as my parents, who lost his job and has taken to sleeping in the porta potty at Cheesman Park to avoid the rain, or the man who was passing out because he could not afford the \$3 copay on his medications. But some days, like today, I leave feeling as if I had little to give, but was invited into someone's life just the same.

Today it was both easy and difficult to see God at work. It is easy to see only heaviness, brokenness, and darkness. Yet, when I looked deeply, I saw God working all the more. I saw God's provision—in the breakfast miracle of feeding twenty-five people with food we received for free. I saw God's peace—in the man with AIDS who despite his situation comforted *me*. And, today I saw God's kingdom—I saw that inverse reality that yells out in a whisper that relationships and divine goodness will overcome even the worst of things. Today I was reminded—in the darkness, the light shines all the more.

*Lauren Brewer is an Urban Servant Corps member, serving in Denver, Colorado.*

# REMEMBERING TO CELEBRATE: BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY AT THIRTY

by Pam Durso

I hardly remember my thirtieth birthday. I was in grad school, working on a dissertation that year, and to be honest, memories of that time of my life are pretty much a blur. My days were spent in the library with stacks of books and squinting at an old microfilm reader. (Hard to believe and this dates me terribly, but I wrote a dissertation in the days before . . . the Internet!) Looking back, I wish I had paid more attention to the significance of that birthday. I did a better job with my fortieth birthday—my parents came from Texas to my North Carolina home to celebrate my “big day.” My mother told stories to my children about the day of my birth. They tried hard not to yawn, and then we ate lots of cake! It was a good day.

In 2011, the year of my fiftieth birthday, I realized that I wanted to mark that significant milestone. I wanted a memorial experience to look back on, so I threw myself a wonderful dinner party. I planned for months and reserved the back room of Violette, one of my favorite restaurants in Atlanta. I sent out invitations to my most loved friends from various seasons and places of my life. I gave great thought to how the party would unfold, and then I waited for the day to arrive.

To my great surprise, friends from far and wide came! My friend, Julie, and my sister, Kenda, both flew in from Texas just for the party. My friend, Suzannah drove from Florida, and several friends came from south Georgia.

What began as a party for me became a celebration of friendship—of deep and lasting connections and of newly formed relationships. For in addition to the amazing food, we shared a time of prayer, words of blessings, and reflections on the love that binds us together. That night lives in my memory as a reminder of the powerful gift that is friendship. So at fifty, I finally gave importance to the celebrating of a major milestone birthday.

This year, in 2013, Baptist Women in Ministry has a milestone anniversary. The organization, which was founded in 1983, is about to be thirty years old, and we need to celebrate. We have made substantial progress in the last thirty years. The numbers of women pastors has grown from 14 in the early 1980s to 150 in 2013. Some 2,250 ordinations of Baptist women have taken place since 1964, when Addie Davis became the first Southern Baptist woman to be ordained. Women make up nearly half of the student population at moderate Baptist seminaries. We have much to celebrate, and yes, much more work still to do.

As an organization, BWIM has endured despite almost total dependence for most its years on volunteer leadership, despite cutbacks to already small budgets, and despite two major office moves. In 2013, BWIM has a stable budget, a full-time, fully funded executive director (and I thank God every day for my fully funded job), and comfortable office space on the Atlanta campus of Mercer University.



Over those thirty years, BWIM has been blessed with strong leaders—women and men who invested themselves in the work. Nancy Sehested was the dreamer, the one who saw the need and articulated the vision for an organization that would advocate for women ministers. Her persuasive leadership, contagious enthusiasm, and prophetic preaching paved the way for a new vision for Baptists, whom she called to be more inclusive in their leadership and language and to give attention to all who suffered injustice and lived with oppression. Every time I read or hear Nancy’s name I have a strong sense of gratitude for her strength, courage, and wisdom, and I am so thankful that she will be our preacher in June at our thirtieth anniversary worship service.

I look forward to June 26, when we can gather at First Baptist Church, Greensboro, North Carolina, and share a time of prayer, speak words of blessings, and remember that it is the love of Christ that binds us all together. I hope you will be there to be memorable time of worship and celebration.

**BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY**

P. O. Box 941294  
Atlanta, GA 31141-1294

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1603  
Atlanta, GA

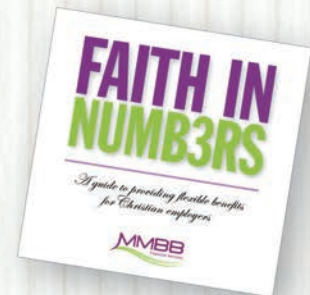
# OFFER YOUR EMPLOYEES REAL RETIREMENT BENEFITS

*(not just* **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN.** *)*

Wouldn't it be nice to give those who are so faithful, hard-working and loyal the kind of retirement benefits they really deserve?

Now you can. In fact, when you add social security benefits to the equation, career members can enjoy their golden years with as much as 86%\* of their pre-retirement income. Others can retire quite handsomely, too.

And no one will have to worry about where their next nickel is coming from. To learn more, send for our free guide "Faith in Numbers," or download it now at: [MMBB.org/benefits](http://MMBB.org/benefits).  
Or call **1-800-986-6222**.



**REAL PLANNING, REAL SOLUTIONS. THAT'S OUR CALLING.**