

LOVE • SERVE • SHARE FORGIVE • ENCOURAGE PRAY • TEACH

2026 WEEK OF PRAYER



Throughout the New Testament, this simple yet profound two-word phrase appears more than fifty times, shaping the very foundation of the early church. Like threads woven throughout Scripture, these words are an invitation to love, serve, forgive, pray for one another—and more. This call to interconnected living defined the early church, and it resonates today for us in the Evangelical Covenant Church as we seek to embody Christ's radical love in our relationships with others.



2026 WEEK OF PRAYER



Dear Beloved Community,

For the 2026 Week of Prayer, I invite you to join me in reflecting on our denominational theme for the year: "One Another." Two texts in Scripture remind us of our divine responsibility to each other: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 JOHN 3:16). And Jesus calls us, "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (JOHN 13:34).

In these words we find the foundation for authentic community built on forgiveness, compassion, and togetherness. In a world often divided by individualism and strife, we are called to embody the love of Jesus in our relationships with one another.

As we engage in prayer and reflection this week, let us commit to also serve one another, embodying an active, tangible love for our neighbors, our church family, and the world. May our commitment to one another become a shining light in our communities, illuminating the path forward as vessels of Christ's enduring love. Together, let us be a living testament to what it truly means to love one another.

In Christ's Unwavering Love,

Rev. Ieisha D. Hawley

DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM WITH MAKE AND DEEPEN DISCIPLES, SERVE LOCALLY



DAY ONE, BY GLENN PETERSON

In a world that prioritizes self—self-sufficiency, self-preservation, self-advancement—today's texts confront us with a different vision. This is not optional. It is a "must." It is integrity—defining reality for followers of Jesus and Christian community. The love of Jesus is not theory—it is lived sacrifice. Jesus did not just talk about love; he demonstrated it through blood, sweat, tears, and sacrifice. And then he turns to us and says, "Do the same. Love one another."

Father God, help us to see your Son as evidence of your love.

What does it look like to live this command as a spouse, parent friend, pastor, and leader in our self-absorbed, competitive, cynical world? What does "love one another" look like for me today?

Jesus, help me to hear your voice.

Jesus said that the mark of his disciples is love—not inspiring sermons, not social media platforms, not cultural influence, not the existence of churches or the act of attending them. Love. Without it, we have

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." 1 JOHN 3:16, NIV

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34, NIV

nothing. But if we do—if we embody cruciform love—it will cut through the noise. It stands out, self-evident in the face of ambition and achievement.

Spirit of God, move among your people and free us to love one another. Empower us to love the world.

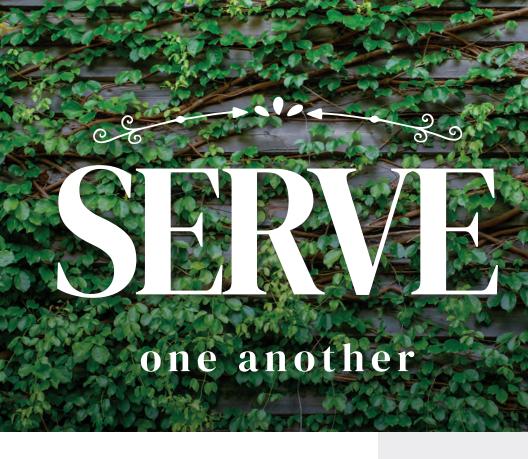
This kind of love is costly. This kind of love interrupts plans and challenges our pride. It may even break your heart. Yet this is the way of Jesus. This is discipleship. Failing to love—and thus failing to follow—is also costly.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- · How do you sense the Spirit speaking to you?
- Who is God calling you to love today?
- How might God be speaking to your community?
 Who is your community being called to love?

PRAYER

Triune God of love, help me—help your people—resist superficial, easy answers. May the overflow of your love be evident in the way your body, the Church, loves one another and the world. Forgive us as individuals and as communities for the ways we have failed to love or chosen not to love one another. In days marked by division, fragmentation, isolation, and hate, renew your church to be a countercultural presence for good. May your Word come alive in us. Amen.



DAY TWO, BY TONY DEGRUY

Success is often measured by how much we accomplish, accumulate, or achieve individually, but Scripture consistently redirects us to a higher calling: a life centered on love expressed through service. In times of stress, change, or uncertainty, this call becomes even more vital. When we serve others, we reflect the grace of God, embody the heart of Jesus, and participate in the interconnected body of Christ.

Galatians 5:13 reminds us that we are called to freedom—not a freedom that indulges the self, but one that expresses itself through loving service. Similarly, 1 Peter 4:10 speaks of living wisely and generously in the light of God's grace, using our gifts to serve one another as faithful stewards.

Let us pause today to reflect on what it means to serve and how our acts of service bring God's kingdom into view. Freedom is a powerful thing. Through Christ, we have been made free from the burden of sin, condemnation, and striving to earn God's favor. Yet Paul, writing to the Galatians, warns us not to confuse this freedom with self-indulgence. In Christ, we are not free to do whatever we please; we are free to love and serve others.

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." GALATIANS 5:13, NIV

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 PETER 4:10, NIV

Serving others is not limited to Sunday mornings or mission trips. We serve through our everyday choices—offering a listening ear, encouraging a friend, bringing a meal to someone who's struggling, extending forgiveness when it's undeserved. Each time we choose another's welfare over our own, we live out the gospel.

Peter adds a crucial perspective: our acts of service aren't merely kind gestures; they're sacred stewardship. God has entrusted each of us with unique gifts, and we use those gifts to strengthen others. Service is a spiritual responsibility, which is integral to our walk with Christ.

Notice how both passages emphasize love and grace. Paul calls us to serve "humbly in love." Peter says to serve as "faithful stewards of God's grace." It is only by God's love and grace that we can pour ourselves out. Service rooted in obligation leads to burnout. But service rooted in grace leads to joy, renewal, and the visible outworking of God's presence through God's people.

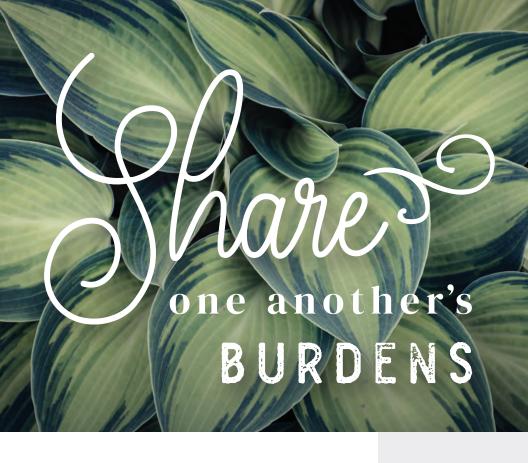
Let your freedom in Christ find fulfillment in greater love. And let your service today reflect your deep gratitude for the one who first served you.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is there a gift or resource you have neglected to offer others?
- Who is the Spirit prompting you to serve so that they can experience God's love through you?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for the freedom you have given us through Christ. Help us not to take it for granted or use it selfishly. Teach us to serve others with humility, love, and joy. May every gift you have given us be used to bring glory to you and grace to others. Amen.



DAY THREE, BY TAMMY LONG

In recent years I've found myself traveling a lot—at least for me. One positive thing about that is I've become fairly adept at packing lighter using my bright red carry-on suitcase and silver backpack. The backpack, though, is still a bit much; with my laptop, journal, and books I hope to read on the plane, it's heavy!

I've learned to manage by shifting it from shoulder to shoulder, letting it ride on my carry-on, and gratefully setting it down with a thud whenever I sit. I'd gotten so used to carrying it that I didn't realize just how much of a burden it was until a recent trip with my husband. He had checked his luggage, so as we made our way to the gate, he offered to carry my backpack. The relief was immediate and my energy renewed. Simply having someone help carry the weight made the journey so much easier!

This is a small glimpse of Paul's encouragement in Galatians 6:2. In the previous verses Paul urges believers to live by and keep in step with the Spirit. So sharing one another's burdens is not merely being "helpful." It's a Spirit-empowered expression of love, patience, kindness, and gentleness, just like all the "one anothers."

"Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." GALATIANS 6:2, NLT

Paul encouraged mature believers to come alongside sisters or brothers caught in sin and to share that burden, moving toward restoration, handled gently, humbly, and with care, and avoiding both pride and falling into the same temptation.

Paul then expands this truth into a kingdom principle. We are to share one another's burdens, thus fulfilling Christ's command to love one another. Burdens can be emotional, financial, physical, or relational—anything too heavy for one person to carry alone. In short, to share someone's burden is to put love into action.

Further, as a "one another" command, we are mutual burden-sharers. That means we are to step in when the weight is overwhelming for someone, and we must be willing to let someone step in for us too. Self-centeredness and pride can keep us from both. We may want to avoid the messiness of someone else's struggle, or we may refuse help we need because we want to look strong. But Paul was clear. Jesus followers are to share one another's burdens with the love of Christ in the power of the Spirit.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Whose burden is God inviting you to share?
- Who has God placed in your life to help carry your burdens?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the people you have placed in my life. Help me to be willing to step in and share what may be too heavy for them alone. Give me grace to receive the help I need to carry my burdens with gratitude. Amen.



DAY FOUR, BY BERNADETTE MOORE

Jake shifted his glance from the flowers blooming just outside his window back to the orange pill he was holding in the palm of his hand. Besides the similarity in color, the two things seemed like polar opposites. He loved staring at the annuals he had planted and hated the sight of that oval-shaped pill. Thoughts of the blooms filled him with joy, but thoughts of the pill filled him with dread. The blossoms saturated his nostrils with a sweet scent when he entered or exited the front door. That pill, however, left a bitter aftertaste in his mouth, and it will likely send him into either a spell of uncontrollable vomiting or diarrhea. How he hates taking that pill! But that dreaded pill cures what ails him. It stops his gastrointestinal flare-ups and minimizes the permanent damage they could cause. It also reduces the pain that accompanies the flare-ups—and less pain makes him much nicer to be around. So whenever Jake recognizes the signs of a flare-up, he must choose whether to take the bitter pill.

Like Jake, many of us experience flare-ups, but ours can be not physical but emotional. They may erupt when we are mistreated, misunderstood, demeaned, undervalued, or excluded, and the bitter pill

"Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." EPHESIANS 4:32, NASB

"Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also." COLOSSIANS 3:13, NASB

prescribed by Scripture is forgiveness. The Greek word χαρίζομαι used in both these passages (and many others in the New Testament) means "forgive," and it includes a sense of forgiving graciously!

We may struggle to swallow the bitter pill of forgiveness because of its side effects, which may include humbling ourselves, temporarily surrendering our rights, or allowing someone to think they got the better of us. But the pill of forgiveness will also minimize permanent damage to your soul (and possibly your body) from bitterness, long-term anger, and resentment. When you take repeated doses of forgiveness (i.e., mentally forgive the one who offended or hurt you every time you remember what they did), your emotional flare-ups will subside, your body will hold less trauma, and with less pain, you will indeed be much nicer to be around.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What signs help you to recognize when your emotions are flaring up due to having been wounded or mistreated?
- When forgiveness feels difficult or even too bitter to swallow, what helps you choose to take a step toward forgiveness anyway?
- How have you experienced God's gift of forgiveness protecting you from the long-term damage of holding onto anger or resentment?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, whenever I am offended, wounded, or mistreated, help me choose to take your prescribed medicine of forgiveness as often as necessary, just as you constantly forgive me in Christ. Amen.



DAY FIVE, BY NANCY SUGIKAWA

Just after college I attended a Christian workshop where we were asked to draw a picture of our future "dream home," the place we would love to live one day. We were told to assume we had access to all the resources we needed, so many of us drew large, beautiful homes at the top of a hill, far away from the city. A few homes were on a private island, while many were surrounded by acres of trees, mountains, and rivers. After taping up all the pictures we had drawn, we noticed that each of us had created an ideal life that was totally isolated from other people, as well as from the chaos and struggles of ordinary life. But was this really the kind of life Jesus called us to live as Christ-followers?

In his letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul writes to young believers who have been experiencing trials and persecution because of their faith. He assures them of the power and presence of Jesus and exhorts them to "encourage one another and build each other up." Similarly, the author of the book of Hebrews writes to those being pressured to revert to their old beliefs, imploring these new believers to encourage one another. The author tells them not to give up meeting together, but to stay connected and "spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

Neither author writes about escaping from the pressures of life and faith or withdrawing from places of pain or confusion. Instead, they exhort their readers to draw close to one other, communing regularly, providing comfort, and challenging each other to remain faithful to Jesus.

The key to encouragement is proximity—physical, emotional, and spiritual closeness. We need to be close enough to share our fears and doubts and to

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

remind each other of God's promises. We need to be close enough to know we are not alone, that someone understands and will walk beside us.

A member of our church, David, volunteered to lead a new Bible study for some disconnected young adults. Those who joined the group came from diverse backgrounds and seemed more comfortable on their electronic devices than sharing their feelings, hopes, or concerns. Many were introverts, so David struggled to build a sense of mutuality and cohesion.

Then one day David discovered that he had cancer and needed both surgery and radiation therapy. He decided to tell the group about his illness even as he was processing his own grief and fears. The news shook up the group as everyone expressed their concerns, determined to bring meals and provide rides for him. One person suggested they lay hands on David to pray for him. Everyone broke down and cried.

As David recovered from his surgery and radiation, the group continued to meet to study Scripture, pray, and coordinate meals and rides for him. Soon each member began to share their own needs, fears, and joys as well. When David returned to the group, he was amazed to see how close and how strong the faith of the group members had become. He had felt called to encourage them, but now he was overwhelmed by how much they encouraged him.

Drawing close enough to experience encouragement takes intentionality and sacrifice. We sacrifice comfort, our own agenda, and even our own dreams so we can be fully present with one another.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How might God be calling you to come near to someone who needs encouragement today?
- How might you invite those who are disconnected to draw closer in Christian community so they can encourage others and be encouraged themselves?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, give us courage to draw near to you and to one another even when it feels scary, costly, or inconvenient. Help us resist the temptation to isolate ourselves or think we are self-sufficient. Instead, help us overcome fear and pride, and intentionally invite intimacy and interdependence. As we encourage others toward faith and faithfulness, may we be encouraged ourselves. Amen.



DAY SIX, BY IEISHA HAWLEY

In a world that can often feel divided and chaotic, the invitation to pray for one another serves as a reminder of the beautiful connection we share as believers. James writes that when we bring each other's burdens before God, healing and hope flow not only to those we're praying for but also back to us.

Lately I've been reflecting on the importance of vulnerability among believers. Sharing our struggles, doubts, and failures can be daunting, yet in moments of transparency we encounter Christ's love reflected to us by our community. By opening our hearts, we create space for others to walk alongside us, pray with us, and reinforce the truth that we are never alone.

There is power in declaring to those with whom we share our burdens that we trust them and that we believe God is present with us. Together we find the courage to face our challenges, inviting God into our struggles.

James emphasizes the transformative power of being united in prayer. When we present our struggles to one another, we initiate a process of healing for ourselves and for those we pray for. We find strength in confessing our imperfections and challenges. This vulnerability creates opportunities to experience the magnitude of Christ's love, strengthens our bonds within the community, and reminds us that we can always lean on one another.

James reminds us of Elijah, a person just like us, whose earnest prayers

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." JAMES 5:16, NIV

altered natural events. The miraculous results were not due to his own greatness but to the greatness of God. That same divine power remains accessible to us today. At times we may hesitate to pray because we feel unworthy or unsure. Yet James encourages us to pray earnestly and intentionally because God works through our humble willingness.

So if someone comes to mind—a friend battling illness, a loved one facing emotional struggles, or anyone navigating a major life transition—don't put it off. Lift them up in prayer in that very moment. Your intercession could be the lifeline they need to remember that they are not alone and that God is always near.

Let's strive to be a community that consistently lifts one another up in prayer, trusting that God hears us and responds. Together, we can embody the love and support our world so desperately needs.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Who in your life needs prayer right now? How can you reach out to support them?
- Have you ever shared a personal struggle with someone in your community? What was the outcome?
- How can increasing the amount you pray for others enhance your own spiritual journey?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of community and the power of prayer. Help us to be obedient to your command to confess our struggles and pray for one another. May we grow in vulnerability and strength as we support each other in fellowship. Ignite a fervor within us to intercede for others and may our prayers lead to healing and transformation. We trust you to work in and through us. In Jesus's name, amen.



DAY SEVEN, BY PETE SUTTON

My college friend Ryan and I had little in common. I was an athlete; he was a musician. I was suburban; he was country. I was outgoing; he was reserved. He was also blind. He navigated campus with a cane, guided by a wall-sized relief map his mother crafted of cardboard, felt, and sandpaper. Ryan loved jokes and playful pranks. Of all the remarkable traits in Ryan, the one that I admired most was his joy. The joy of the Lord compelled Ryan to burst out in worship anytime and anywhere. Whether we were crossing a road, sitting in the cafeteria, or lounging by the lake, Ryan would spontaneously launch into a song—often well-known but sometimes original—loudly. He had a marvelous voice, perfect pitch, and was never content to sing alone. He invited everyone around to join him, and his joy was so irresistible that even the most tone-deaf friends sang along.

I think of Ryan when I read Colossians 3:15–17. Paul instructs the church to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" and "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This indwelling should result in "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" that teach and admonish one another with thankful hearts.

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." COLOSSIANS 3:16, NIV

Three things stand out in this instruction:

We can't share what we don't possess. The peace and message of Christ must dwell within us if it is to affect those around us. The command is to surrender to the indwelling of Christ and his Word. This leads to a complete transformation of who we are and what we do. It's the continuation of Paul's earlier instruction to take off the old self and be clothed with Christ-likeness. This is only possible because of the indwelling of Christ.

The peace and message of Christ are meant to be shared. Like my friend Ryan, if the peace and message of Christ dwell within us, we can't just sing in the shower or quietly hum to ourselves. We must belt it out! This spontaneous exuberance is a defining mark of God's family. Are you bubbling over with joy and gratitude? You must be a child of God!

Teaching is the implication, not the command. According to Paul, teaching and admonishing are a natural result of Christ's peace and message dwelling within us. Paul is commanding us to so fully embody Christ's words that our lives become a form of instruction for those around us.

Ryan's spontaneous singing was a testament to the joy dwelling within him. He wasn't trying to lecture us on music; he was simply overflowing with Jesus! Similarly, the joy and peace we have in Christ should be so abundant that it naturally spills out, drawing others in. This is not about being a perfect evangelist, but about living a life so transformed by Christ's presence that others can't help but join the song.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who in your life has been an example of overflowing joy, gratitude, and the peace of Christ?
- How might God be inviting you to experience and embody joy, gratitude, and peace?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, empty me of myself and fill me with your presence. May the peace of Christ dwell richly within me and transform me inside and out. May the joy of Jesus grow within me and burst out in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, instructing and inspiring others to love and follow Jesus. And may the Holy Spirit empower me in word and deed to be grateful for and generous with all that I've been given. In Jesus's name, amen.



BONUS DAY BY TRINITY OPP

One of the great joys and responsibilities of being a parent is teaching my children to love Jesus, become like Jesus, and share Jesus with others. While I don't always feel adequate to teach my children, I recognize the privilege of this responsibility. As a follower of Jesus, I take comfort in the sufficiency of God's Word to help me teach them how to live for Jesus.

In teaching my children, I have learned the importance of practicing what I teach. On occasion my children give me gentle reminders (or one could say they teach me!) that I don't always do what I teach. Sometimes it comes in the form of the heart-penetrating question, "Dad, is this a time we are to do what you say, not do as you do?" More than anyone, my children have taught me that integrity matters when we teach one another and that our example can be as important as the words we speak.

As members of God's family, we are commanded to teach one another. Surely, we will all benefit from the wise counsel of the spiritually mature women and men among us, but let's not underestimate the benefits that come from the whole body of Christ participating in teaching one another.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." 2 TIMOTHY 3:16, NLT

While it is important that we look to the Bible for what we teach one another, we never overlook the importance of how we go about teaching one another. As we seek to follow the command to "teach one another" in the family of God, may we do so in a spirit of charity and humility. This requires a posture that is gentle, yet uncompromising, full of grace and truth, merciful, loving, and caring for the interests of others above our own. Let us also embrace the value of learning from one another with a teachable spirit, being approachable, asking good questions, and taking time to listen more than we speak.

Our goal as Christians is to conform to the image of Christ. That is the work of the gospel in our lives. As the mosaic of our Covenant family grows, may we teach one another and learn from one another so that together we can mature in Christ and effectively live on mission for the glory of God and our neighbor's good.

REFLECTION QUESTION

 Where might God be inviting you to align your words and actions more closely, so that your life reflects Christ to those around you?

PRAYER

Jesus, help me to live with charity and humility toward my faith family. Give me a teachable spirit and a willingness to listen and learn from others. Forgive me when my pride or arrogance gets in the way of my relationship with others. Holy Spirit, give me wisdom and let the Word of God be the foundation from which I speak. May my life be a living example of what it means to be conformed to the image of Christ. Amen.

author bios

DAY 1—LOVE ONE ANOTHER **Glenn Peterson**

Glenn Peterson serves as senior director of church planting for the Evangelical Covenant Church. His wife, Bekah, and their four children have recently relocated to the United States after living and serving the Covenant Church in Canada for the last 25 years. He is excited to see how God will move in and through the church in this next season.



DAY 2 — SERVE ONE ANOTHER **Tony A. DeGruy**

Tony A. DeGruy is an ambivert and seminary student who serves as the formation pastor and leads the Advocates for Justice Ministry at South Bay Community Church in Fremont, California. He sits on the board of The Jesus and Justice Collective, a group of churches in the San Francisco East Bay area focused on seeing biblical justice lived out in the community. He also sits on the executive board of The Flourish Collective, helping lead in the area of faith and justice.



DAY 3 — SHARE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS Rev. Tammy Long

Tammy Long is the lead pastor of South Bay Community Church in Fremont, California. She is an ordained pastor with the Evangelical Covenant Church, a trained spiritual director, and a writer. She is passionate about seeing people connect with God and grow deeper in love with the Trinity, both individually and in intentional community, in a way that touches the world with God's lavish love



DAY 4 — FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER **M. Bernadette Moore**

M. Bernadette Moore serves as executive pastor of Bethel Bible Fellowship, a Covenant congregation in Carrollton, Texas. She is ordained by the Evangelical Covenant Church and holds a doctor of ministry degree in preaching from North Park Theological Seminary. As a single woman with no children, she has devoted herself to preaching, teaching, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ. She enjoys knitting, crocheting, witty conversation, and belly laughs.









DAY 5 — ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER Nancy Sugikawa

Nancy Sugikawa is a discipleship coach with the Pacific Northwest Conference, helping pastors and churches develop meaningful discipleship pathways and resources. She has been an associate pastor for over 20 years, overseeing discipleship, leadership development, evangelism, and global outreach. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and Fuller Theological Seminary and is ordained by the Covenant. Nancy has also served with several Asian American ministries that mentor young pastors.

DAY 6 — PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER **leisha Hawley**

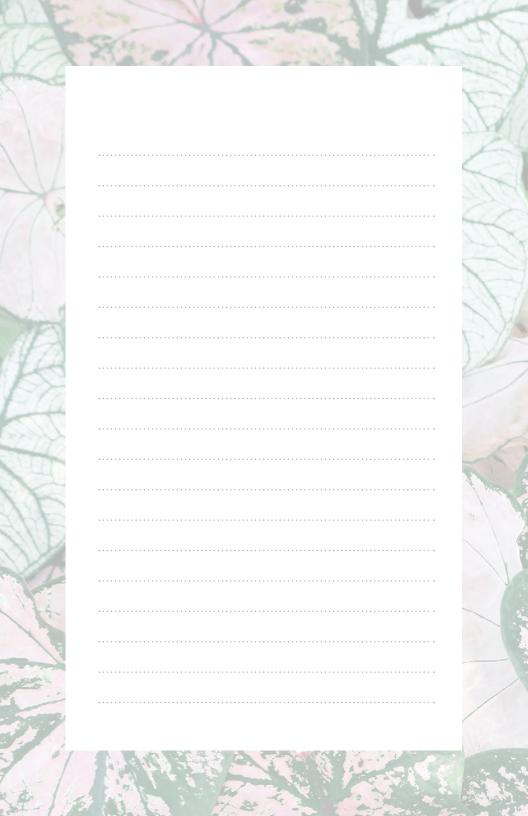
leisha Hawley is an ordained Covenant pastor and director of evangelism for the Evangelical Covenant Church. Her extensive career in ministry and experience serving as pastor, chaplain, and coach has prepared her to work with regional conferences and local congregations throughout the Covenant.

DAY 7 — TEACH ONE ANOTHER **Pete Sutton**

With nearly three decades of youth ministry experience, Pete Sutton serves as the director of youth and young adults for the Evangelical Covenant Church. From 2018 to 2020, he served as an adjunct instructor teaching youth ministry at North Park University. He earned a bachelor's degree in biblical studies with an emphasis on Christian education from Cedarville College in Ohio and a master's degree in biblical studies from Wheaton College. Pete and his wife, Jocelyn, call Chicagoland home and have seven children and two grandchildren.

BONUS DAY — TEACH ONE ANOTHER **Trinity Opp**

Trinity Opp serves as the lead pastor of Alexandria Covenant Church in Alexandria, Minnesota, and currently serves as a member of the Covenant Executive Board. He and his wife, Gwen, have been married for 25 years and have five children.







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