

# SAM

SEASONED ADULT MINISTRY  
SERVING THE GREAT

# I AM

FBC TRUSSVILLE

## JANUARY 2024

### LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH

*Let there be peace on earth  
And let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth  
The peace that was meant to be.  
With God as our father  
Brothers all are we.  
Let me walk with my brother  
In perfect harmony.*

*Let peace begin with me.  
Let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take  
Let this be my solemn vow.  
To take each moment  
And live each moment  
In peace eternally.*

*Let there be peace on earth  
And let it begin with me.*

[CLICK HERE](#) to listen to song.

**Seasoned Adult Minister:** Bob Smith  
**SAM Assistant:** Debbie Arrington  
**SAM News Editor:** Judy Bryant  
**SAM News Assoc. Editor:** June Mathews  
**Newsletter Design:** Stephanie Entrup

*This newsletter is prepared and emailed monthly by and for 55+ adults of First Baptist Church Trussville, Alabama. Suggested information to be included in an upcoming SAM newsletter may be emailed to [sam.news@fbctrussville.org](mailto:sam.news@fbctrussville.org). Printed copies will be available at the church Welcome Center and Events Center.*

# LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH, AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

She struggled through a traumatic childhood and after a divorce from her first husband, she resorted to attempted suicide. Jill Jackson Miller was an actress then a stay-at-home mom. After divorce, she found herself with low self-esteem and she'd lost her sense of purpose. BUT GOD, had plans for her life. The suicide failed and she had a spiritual awakening, a strong belief in God that changed her life. She and her new husband, Sy Miller (an actor, composer and songwriter) wrote this song in 1955, almost 65 years ago!

Jill Jackson Miller gave her new life to promoting world peace and spoke often about the power of each person to help create peace. "She encouraged people to keep searching for their meaning, their inspiration, their true beliefs, and to forgive themselves and others for mistakes made along the way."

As this New Year begins, can there be a better goal for ourselves, our communities, and our world than this? To spend time every day in the presence of God, being filled with and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Peace is a gift, given to us by God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, and promised to us for eternity. Indeed, Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Peace can be very elusive, especially in the midst of troubling times. It is in believing, following, obeying, and trusting Him that we receive God's peace and find our strength.

From Jesus Listens, Sarah Young: "I'm thankful that Your Peace is not an elusive goal, hidden at the center of a complicated maze. Because I belong to You, I'm already enveloped in the Peace that is inherent in Your Presence."

There are over 400 scripture references to peace in the Bible. Jesus said, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

The Prince of Peace is our greatest example and with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, through the best of times, even through the worst of times, we can BE peacemakers. "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

Let this be our story in 2024.

**Isaiah 64:4; Philippians 4:6-7; Romans Chapter 12**

"PEACE IS  
NOT THE  
ABSENCE OF  
TROUBLE,  
BUT THE  
PRESENCE  
OF CHRIST."

*Charles Spurgeon*



**First Baptist Church**  
128 N. Chalkville Road  
Trussville, AL 35173

**A light lunch available after all Monday on Campus Events** (cost recovery donation)

For more Information Contact the  
**Seasoned Adult Ministry**  
Office @ 205-228-1006

# first MONDAY EVENTS 2024

**First Monday Prayer Time – 10:00 am in Room D-139**  
First Monday Events following at 11:00 am

**March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Bob Pitman**  
Evangelist, Muscle Shoals, AL



**April 1<sup>st</sup>**

**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Johnny Fain**  
Pastor (Retired) First Baptist, Dothan, AL



**May 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Bus Departs 8:30 am Montgomery**  
**Dr. Sammy Gilbreath (REVIVE Conference)**  
Alabama Evangelism Director (Retired)



**June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**SUNDAY 9:15 am 10:45 am**  
**Dr. Don Wilton**  
Pastor (Retired), First Baptist, Spartanburg, SC  
*Dr. Billy Graham's Pastor for the last 20 years of Dr. Graham's life*



**June 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>**

**MONDAY and WEDNESDAY**  
**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** *Prayer Support*

**July 1<sup>st</sup>**

**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Jay Wolfe**  
Pastor (Retired), First Baptist, Montgomery, AL



**August 5<sup>th</sup>**

**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Mac Brunson**  
Pastor, Valleydale Church, Birmingham, AL



**September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

 **LABOR DAY** 

**October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Robert Smith**  
Professor, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL



**November 4<sup>th</sup>**

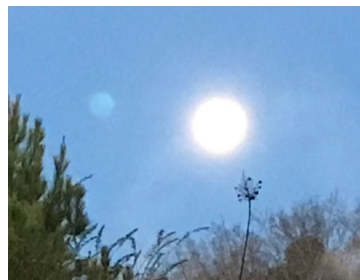
**MONDAY 11:00 am**  
**Dr. Gary Hollingsworth**  
Retired Pastor, First Baptist Church Trussville, AL



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Hope all you winter month birthday friends caught a glimpse of the stunning full moon, a/k/a the Cold Moon shining so brightly for four days at Christmas, just for you!

**The Cold Moon, the year's last and longest full moon, appeared here in Trussville on Monday night, December 25, still shining brightly in the morning sky on Thursday December 28.** According to the Farmer's Almanac, the Cold Moon name came from the Mohawk people and is named for the frigid conditions of winter when the moon is visible. There are other names for this beautiful light in the sky: Winter Maker Moon, Snow Moon, and Long Night Moon.



## ANOTHER YEAR IS DAWNING

*Another year is dawning:*

*Dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee;  
Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise,  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence all the days.*

*Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face;  
Another year of leaning  
Upon Thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting,  
Of quiet, happy rest.*

*Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.*

*Another year is dawning:  
Dear Father, let it be,  
On earth or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee.*

*Written by  
Frances Ridley Havergal  
(1836-1879)*

# THERE IS NO GOD LIKE JEHOVAH

By June Mathews.

Jerry King has a story to tell. But not just any story. It's a story of redemption. It's a story of healing. And it's a story of a man who summons the courage to share his heart.

But most of all, it's a story given and ordained by God to be a message of hope and salvation to all who hear it. In other words, as Jerry often says, "It's HIS story."

Though the testimony Jerry now gives every chance he gets centers around events in 2023, his life as a born-again Christian began when as a nine-year-old boy, he walked the aisle and was saved and baptized. But it wasn't until 60 years later that his faith took a giant leap forward when in a few short months, he twice experienced God's goodness like he never had before.

Many of you have already heard in your small groups how Jerry's concern for his sister prompted him to talk with her about spiritual matters and pray with her to receive Christ. And how, soon afterward, Jerry suffered a major health crisis. In a turnabout no one could have imagined only weeks before, his sister prayed for him. Only God, right?

## "GOD GAVE ME A STORY TO TELL"

By Jerry King

My name is Jerry King. My wife, Beth, and I will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary in March 2024. We have three children and seven grandchildren. We have been members at First Baptist Trussville since 1999 and are in Bob Wood's small group.

First, thanks to those of you who have prayed and supported my family and me throughout the events I'm going to talk about in this story.

Why tell this story?

While praying for a reason why God would want me to share it, I asked Him to show me the people who could help me spread this story, which is really His story.

Soon I encountered several people, some teachers of small groups in our church. I lacked boldness to talk to them until I realized these were probably the people God had sent my way. So I made myself intentionally talk to them about this story. I felt God was laying on my heart to tell it. I went as far as to chase one teacher into an elevator just to ask her to allow me to speak to her class.

This was the start of something wonderful in my life and in my church. I am not a speaker or a writer, but I am a witness, and I do have a story to tell. His story.

But whether you've already heard him speak or not, we're giving you the means to visit (or revisit) Jerry's testimony and perhaps even share what he refers to as "God's story" with your family and friends. Go to page 9 to read it.

*From ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You [God], who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. 1 Corinthians 2:9*

• HOW TO BE •

# SAM with KEN LASS **SATIONAL!**

Two goldfish are swimming in a fishbowl on a living room table. One goldfish says to the other "I don't believe in God. How can I trust something I can't see or touch?" To which the other goldfish replies "Oh yeah? Well, if there's no God, then who changes the water every week?"

It's an old joke, but it makes a good point. Trusting in something you can't see takes absolute faith, and that's something that goes against our very nature. Everything about human existence and reasoning is relative. For example, are you tall or short? The answer is relative. I am a giant compared to my two-year-old grandson who can barely reach up to my waist, but tiny compared to Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who is seven foot two inches tall.

Are you wealthy or poor? The answer is relative. You are poor compared to Bill Gates or Sam Walton, but to that homeless person who will spend this night sleeping under a bridge, you are wealthy beyond measure. Are you healthy? Are you busy? Are you popular? Do you live in a big house? Drive a nice car? Are you old? The answer to these questions is relative. Compared to what?

We live in a relative world. We make all our judgements based on some sort of frame of reference. All of which makes the Christian walk a bit of a challenge, because the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ centers around accepting God as an absolute. God is always right, always perfect, always in control, always in authority. There's nothing relative about Him. His Word never changes. He can't be compared to anybody or anything.

Our limited human minds wonder how this can be. After all, we adapt and adjust to fit new circumstances all the time. Instead of writing letters we send emails and text messages. Instead of going to the store we order merchandise on the internet. Instead of cashing our checks to pay our bills we sign up for direct deposit. It used to be okay for teachers to lead prayer in school. Now it isn't. It used to be okay to publicly condemn abortion and homosexuality. Now it isn't. Graphic language and sexual behavior on television used to be forbidden. Now it isn't. Things change. Whether something is acceptable or not is relative to the evolving cultural norms of the times.

Surely God adapts to changing culture and trends as well, right?

Of course not. God has set the absolute standard from the beginning of history. He laid down rules for Adam and Eve in the garden according to an absolute standard which has never changed. He gave the ten commandments to Moses. He rose up prophets to instruct the kings. He punished the disobedient. He was the authority then and He is now. Being a Christian means stepping out of this relative world and trusting in God's absolute promise of salvation for His followers.

**I absolutely recommend it.**



# LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING

## FIRST MONDAY PRAYER FOCUS

10:00AM • Room D139

Stop by wherever you are and join us in prayer.

Email prayer requests to

[Sam.prayer@fbctrussville.org](mailto:Sam.prayer@fbctrussville.org)



## FIRST THURSDAY: MEN PRAYING for their ONE

6:30AM • D139



## LADIES PRAYING for their ONE

12:00PM • Room D139

Share the first name of your "ONE" and any information you wish by email: [pray41@fbctrussville.org](mailto:pray41@fbctrussville.org)

## JOYFUL HEARTS REHEARSALS

Every 1st & 3rd Thursday • 10:30AM • Fellowship Hall

## SAM VOCAL BAND REHEARSALS

(Men's Southern Gospel Group)

Wednesdays • 4:30PM • Room D139



## PRECEPTS BIBLE STUDY

Ladies, join us on Wednesdays at 9:00AM beginning January 10 in D142

We will study the book of Psalms

Contact: Denise Dockery if you would

like to sign up @ [dockerymom@gmail.com](mailto:dockerymom@gmail.com)

## MEN'S 6:11 BREAKFAST RETURNS

Thursday, January 11 • 6:11AM • Gym

## EDIBLE EDUCATION RETURNS

Thursday, January 11 • 11:30AM • FH • \$6

Guest Speaker: **Kendell Jno-Finn**

Creating your Health and Wellness Plan for 2024

Pre-register for the meal [HERE](#)

## MINI WRITER'S CONFERENCE

Monday, January 15 • 9:00AM to Noon  
D139 • \$10

Keynote Speaker: *Jennifer Rash, president and editor-in-chief of TAB Media Group, which publishes The Alabama Baptist and The Baptist Paper*

We will be sharing tips for writing and conducting a fun writing exercise. We will have a used book exchange ... bring a book, take home a book. And much more!

Lunch will be served at Noon. Reservations are required.

Reserve your spot today by emailing June at

[jmathews120@charter.net](mailto:jmathews120@charter.net)

## MONTHLY SAM LUNCHEON

Thursday, January 25 • 10:30AM • Gym

Special Guest: **James Spann**



## 2024 SAM Meal Tickets

On sale during the month of January  
at the Event Center • \$85



## SAVE THE DATE!

## REGISTER NOW!

2nd Annual FBCT Ladies Conference

January 26-27, 2024

Friday night (6:00-8:45PM)

Saturday morning (8:00AM-12:30PM)

Tickets: \$60

Guest Speaker: **Whitney Capps**

*On God, His Goodness*

*(And What To Do When it Doesn't Seem So Good)*

Dinner on Friday night, Breakfast on Saturday morning, and Conference T-shirt are included in ticket cost!

## JANUARY JUBILEE BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 31 • 10:00 to 11:00AM  
FREE • Room D139

*Bible Study in Ephesians 1*

*Led by Gary Hollingsworth*

*Special Music by Scott Strickland & Bob Smith*

For reservations, call or text Henry Ward at (205) 983-4149 by January 25.



# FBCT CHRISTMAS HIGHLIGHTS 2023



## O COME LET US ADORE HIM

*By Judy Bryant*

This writer enjoyed every part of the Christmas season here at FBCT, but I have to say I have never been moved more than I was by our choir presentation as we gathered together in the beautifully decorated sanctuary on Sunday morning, December 17. Clay Campbell led the choir and orchestra masterfully. I heard comments from others after the service: "Y'all need to take that to Carnegie Hall!"; "Wow, what a rip-roaring way to begin the season!"; "I cried through the whole thing!" and "I loved how all the music just blended so well."

While every piece was excellent, most would agree that the duet sung by Kristy White and Bob Smith stole our hearts. "Ten Thousand Joys," a song I do not remember ever having heard, was perfectly selected for these two voices. I hummed all the way through Christmas.



Just like that, on a gloomy day forecast, the black clouds rolled back, the sun began to shine, and the rain subsided. **The 2023 Trussville Christmas Parade** began making its way down Main Street.

With Pastor Buddy driving, our Student minister, Spencer Jones leading the way on the streets, and church members seated in the train, our prize winning "best overall" Polar Express cruised by in all its glory! Many thanks to the Seasoned Adult and student ministry volunteers who did a fabulous job building the Polar Express.

Besides Santa, of course, who do you suppose was the most popular character in this year's parade? Mr. Grinch! If we saw one, we saw twenty!





## AND A CAROLING WE DID GO!

What joy our Joyful Hearts Singers and other volunteers brought to so many who could not get out during the Christmas season. On one of the days they were out caroling, our bus passed by the home of James and Shirley Long. When the bus pulled up, this great couple just jumped on the bus and sang with the carolers!



## Our SAM Christmas Banquet

on Sunday, December 10, featuring the talented Williamson Branch and the special meal prepared by our favorite chef, Mrs. Georgia, was wonderful. The tables were set beautifully, and the addition of hors d'oeuvres before the meal was welcomed. We are grateful for the students who served us. What a great job they did to raise money for summer mission trips.

The Williamson Branch family introduced themselves as "A Classy Sassy" Williamson Branch. They proved true to that name! Especially the young Cadence, who danced and picked all over that stage for the entire hour, and mind you, she did it for both of the performances they did for our group that day. What energy! The group was singing, stomping, dancing, picking, and hollering; all of us were rocking out and tapping our feet along with them, to "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," no less! We especially enjoyed young Isaac Daniels' break-out performance as Elvis. Isaac is a family friend of the group.



On a more serious note, Cadence sang beautifully Mary's story "Be Born in Me (Mary)," a song by Francesca Battistelli. The group reminded us "He (God) would do it all again, even if it was just you!" Oh Lord, help us all when we can't see Your plan to pray as young Mary did in this song, "help me to see through Heaven's eyes."



# PRAYER FOCUS

From Susan Hornsby

Pray for the peoples of Ukraine and Israel, the leaders of their countries and our own country, and most especially remember our missionaries, families and friends serving in these war-torn areas.

## KENYA MISSION TRIP JANUARY 13-24.

The real purpose of our mission trip is to help establish a new church in Malindi, Kenya on the east coast of Kenya. The church will be under construction when we get there. Construction will continue while we hold our medical clinic there on site. The medical clinic draws the people in the surrounding areas. Some of them will walk many miles in the middle of the night just to see an American doctor the next day. We are expecting to see nearly 2000 patients in our five days of clinic (Tuesday- Saturday).

After they see the doctor and receive their medications, they are offered an opportunity to go to the prayer tent, where they can have prayer for whatever their needs are and of course they will hear the gospel. In the afternoon, each day after clinic, we hold "Crusade." This is sort of like a revival atmosphere, where again they will hear a sermon, the gospel and participate in very lively worship. I love to worship with the Kenyans!

Our group of 23 will be leaving Birmingham headed to Kenya about lunchtime on January 13th. We will spend Sunday night in Nairobi, Kenya. Monday morning, we will fly to Malindi, the city where our clinic will be.

Sunday, January 21st is the church dedication service. The pastor and his wife will be installed and blessed as well as the charter new congregation, many of whom will have been patients who heard the gospel in clinic. A beautiful service for sure! Tears will flow!

### KENYA CREW

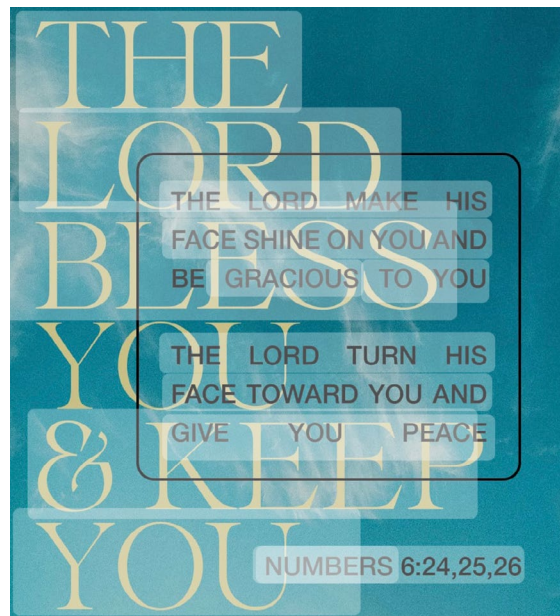
Amber Baskin  
Leigh Bennett\*  
Robin Burns\*  
Chris Chambers\*  
Mary Ann Davis\*  
Lois Duran\*

Alicia Evans  
Melissa Gomez  
Hailey Hallmark  
Robin Haririan  
Michael Hirezi  
Emma Raye Holmes

Susan Hornsby\*  
Allison Howell  
Lawrence Jones  
Fiona Neely\*  
Rachel Preast  
Jeremy Rogers\*

Davilyn Smith\*  
Lauren Smith\*  
Russell Smith\*  
Anna Katherine Summers\*  
Dusty Underwood\*

*\*FBCT Members*



**SEE MORE NEWS IN THE ELECTRONIC VERSIONS (EMAIL AND CHURCH WEBSITE) OF THIS NEWSLETTER. CHECK IT OUT AT [www.fbctrussville.org](http://www.fbctrussville.org), ON THE SAM MINISTRY PAGE.**

**Not receiving our SAM newsletters?** How do you prefer to receive our newsletters each month? By email and/or paper copy mailed to you? If you haven't already or you need to update your preference, please contact Debbie Arrington in the SAM Office at 205-228-1006 or email at [debbie@fbctrussville.org](mailto:debbie@fbctrussville.org). Everyone for whom we have an up-to-date email address will receive the newsletters by email; however, if you prefer to have a paper copy mailed to you each month, let Debbie know. We will be happy to mail one to you!



# "GOD GAVE ME A STORY TO TELL"

By Jerry King

My name is Jerry King. My wife, Beth, and I will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary in March 2024. We have three children and seven grandchildren. We have been members at First Baptist Trussville since 1999 and are in Bob Wood's small group.

First, thanks to those of you who have prayed and supported my family and me throughout the events I'm going to talk about in this story.

Why tell this story?

While praying for a reason why God would want me to share it, I asked Him to show me the people who could help me spread this story, which is really His story.

Soon I encountered several people, some teachers of small groups in our church. I lacked boldness to talk to them until I realized these were probably the people God had sent my way. So I made myself intentionally talk to them about this story. I felt God was laying on my heart to tell it. I went as far as to chase one teacher into an elevator just to ask her to allow me to speak to her class.

This was the start of something wonderful in my life and in my church. I am not a speaker or a writer, but I am a witness, and I do have a story to tell. His story.

What is your story?

I always thought my story was a nine-year-old boy walking the aisle at church, asking Jesus to come into my heart and being baptized. This may be similar to most other Christians. But sixty years later, I lived and experienced a much greater story, a story to be told.

In about January 2023, God's story began with Beth and me walking the aisle and rededicating our lives to Christ. We all know how every time you turn to Christ, Satan tries to interfere.

Soon after that, my nephew from Missouri passed away. At his celebration of life, my family and I were sitting around a table. The question of my nephew's salvation came up, and my sister, Sandy, said, "I guess I'll bust Hell wide open."


Those words from my sister burned deep in my heart. I couldn't stand the thought of my sister being lost forever in Hell.

She'd had a hard life recently, her husband having Alzheimer's and her caring for him at home. Not only that, her oldest son, about 45 years old, choked to death on a granola bar in front of his wife and two small daughters. Sandy couldn't understand why a loving God would treat her that way.

Her thoughts were understandable, but someone had to talk with her about her salvation. I was convinced that someone was ME.

I asked God to give me the boldness to approach her with the good news of Jesus Christ, and that it's never too late to rededicate her life to Him to ensure her place in Heaven with her husband and son.

In Bob's class, we added her to our prayer list, and we began praying for God to soften her heart and help her realize her need for Christ.



We prayed and prayed for her, as well as for me to help lead her back to Christ.

I put off talking with her for a couple months until one night, I got a call from my brother's wife that my sister had been in a serious automobile accident. My heart sank. I was sure I had missed my chance to witness to her. Praise God, though, she was still alive.

She had a broken vertebra and ankle, and during a routine body scan, doctors found two spots on her lungs and pelvis. Possible cancer, they said. The doctors told her she was blessed that they found the spots before it was too late.

When I hung up the phone, I vowed to have that talk with her the next day.

The next day was Sunday, and we told our class what had happened. We prayed for her, and the class laid hands on me and prayed that God would give me the boldness to help her.

After service that morning, I wanted to visit her and take her a Bible. She had been away from God for so long, I thought she may not have one.

But where would I find the kind of Bible I thought she would need? It needed to be easy to see and read, an NIV version. Well, there in the pew pocket was that very Bible. Pastor Buddy had often said that if you need a Bible, take one. So off I went to visit my sister with my "stolen" Bible under my arm.

On the drive to the hospital, I prayed that the room would be clear of visitors and doctors. This would make it easier for me to talk with her.

On entering the room, we met a nurse and my nephew there. What should I do now? The nurse immediately said he was going to lunch and left. My nephew said he was hungry, and he left, too. As I walked him to the door, I closed it behind him. I attempted to lock it, but there was no lock.

God had emptied the room to make my talk easier.

Sandy and I talked about how the wreck happened. She had passed out behind the wheel, left the road, and stopped in a ditch. When the paramedics examined her, they made a comment about how God was looking after her.

She had come close to a grove of trees. Had she left the ditch and hit the trees, her injuries could have been much worse – possibly fatal – because she had increased speed and gone airborne. But she had come to rest back in the ditch.

At that point, she realized that God was taking care of her. She agreed with the paramedics, and they all thanked God.

This incident had softened Sandy's heart, and our talk was much easier for both of us.

I gave her the Bible, and we prayed for her to receive Christ. We prayed together and cried together, and God restored Sandy's faith in Him.

We kept Sandy in our prayers, asking God that she have a quick and complete recovery.

In June, I went on a mission trip to Baltimore, Maryland, with our Men On Mission church construction group.

We worked that Friday and Saturday to prepare the worksite for the main group of about 87 men coming in that weekend.

On that Sunday morning, while dressing for church services, I began to have chest pains. Paramedics were called in, and as they loaded me into an ambulance, they asked if I wanted them to call my wife. I said, "Not right now. Wait 'til we find out what the problem is."

As soon as I said that, my wife, who usually isn't awake that early, called me. So I had to tell her what was going on and persuade her to wait until we had a diagnosis before coming to Maryland. I assured her I was going to be alright.

I was wrong.

I went to sleep in one hospital and woke up in another. I had two blockages in my heart, corrected by stents, but I had developed brain bleeds. So I had to be transported to another hospital for treatment of the brain bleeds.

Beth was already with me, but the doctor recommended that she call my children to come if they wanted to see their dad one last time. They made the trip but sadly, I don't even remember their visit.

While unconscious for three days, I experienced something I'll never forget: I experienced Hell – the Lake of Fire. I saw the flames and felt the pain of being burned.

HELL IS REAL.

I cried and called out to God to please get me out of this awful place. This is not where I belonged. This was not what He promised me.

Instantly, I awoke in my hospital room, crying like a baby, strapped to my bed with Beth lying on me. She heard my cries and was afraid for me. I told her what I had seen, and we both cried and prayed.

Right away, I started improving. My doctor and the nurses were amazed at how I was recovering. I even witnessed to three nurses.

Sandy called and told me how hard she had prayed for me. She said she knew Satan was after me because I was trying to help her.

I assured her that Satan could never get me. Jesus assures us that nobody can pluck us from His hand.

This lady who had given up on God was now talking to Him every day.

My condition improved remarkably. The doctor said I could go home soon and begin therapy.

Now to get home. We were 800 miles from home with no money and no ride. Our church family, however, took care of us, offering funds for airfare, train fare or whatever we needed. Some people even said they would come get us.

At first the doctors said no flying, but I improved so quickly, they changed their minds. So we flew home. God was able to take care of everything Satan threw at us.

After arriving home, Sandy called to tell me about her visit to her pulmonary doctor. He showed her the scans made immediately after her accident that showed spots on her lungs. Then he showed her the latest scans. The spots were gone!

Our faith will be rewarded. God rekindled Sandy's faith yet again.

After being home from Maryland for a few days, a friend from church stopped by my house for a visit. He gave me a get-well gift, a book he had written. He'd felt led by God to give it to Beth and me, and this book truly turned my heart.

I read the book and highlighted segments that really impacted my life and my story. I would like to close with these words from an anonymous author quoted in the book:

## A NEW DAY

*This is the beginning of a new day.*

*God has given me this day to use as I will.*

*I can waste it or use it for good.*

*What I do this day is very important, because*

*I am exchanging my life for it.*

*When this day comes, I want it to be gain, not*

*Loss – good, not evil – success, not failure,*

*Leaving something of value in its place.*

*For each new day can be the promise*

*Of a successful future.*

*--Anonymous*

As I finished reading the book on the Saturday before I spoke to my first small group on Sunday, I read the list of questions provided at the end. I was compelled (God-led) to include these questions in His story.

## FINAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Where is your god (God)? What is your god (God)? Who is your god (God)?
2. What is your story?
3. Is your story really God's story?
4. With whom to you need to share your/God's story?
5. What will you do to share your/God's story?
6. When will you share your/God's story?
7. What difference will your legacy make in the next generation(s)?
8. What will your legacy look like in five years after your departure?

For the glory of God! Because it really is ALL ABOUT HIM!\*

Answering these questions has become a private part of my life.

God gave me... A STORY TO TELL.

\*(From "Essential Discipleship Preparation" by James Long)

