

NOVEMBER 2020

Christian Health Care Newsletter



David C. Nielsen

We're counting the many blessings God has given us in a difficult year

From Samaritan Leadership

THIS HAS BEEN a most unusual and challenging year.

As we approach the time of year that our country has historically set aside to express gratitude, it may be more challenging than usual to feel thankful with the profound effects of COVID-19 and the ongoing national disruption. Yet, in many ways, we face the same type of tension in 2020 that we always do. On the one hand, it is easy to count many blessings; we are indeed still a very fortunate people with so many good things that are easy to take for granted. On the other hand, we face the trials—sometimes even overwhelming ones—of living in a fallen world.

We must deliberately choose to do by faith what the Apostle Paul says is God's will for us: "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

As the leaders of Samaritan Ministries, some amazing blessings easily come to mind. We think immediately of what a privilege it is to serve you, the members of Samaritan Ministries International. You are great exam-

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Samaritan™
MINISTRIES

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Knowing what we ought to pray.

Member Letter:

GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE
THROUGH HIS PEOPLE

We praise and glorify God for you, your ministry, and for the members. We are blown away at how amazingly God provides for His people, through His people in this ministry!

What a blessing it is to have our medical bills all shared, plus all the loving notes of encouragement and prayers ... words cannot express how truly grateful we are.

God is soooooo good, and Samaritan Ministries is such a blessing! God bless you.

Susan and Philip
ILLINOIS



Sharing Summary | October 2020

NEEDS

\$26,706,621*

MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

79,967

SHARES

\$29,292,273

* Due to the Lord providing more Shares than Needs, we were also able to share some November bills ahead of schedule.

Contact Us | 877-764-2426 | Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org

QUESTIONS ABOUT?

Your medical Need
Shares you are sending or receiving
Your membership

EMAIL

needs@samaritanministries.org
membership@samaritanministries.org
membership@samaritanministries.org

PHONE MENU

1-1
1-2
1-3

Have a Need? Use the Health Resources App on Dash



- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook. Receive a \$250 reward when you submit a screenshot showing you chose a green fair-price provider.
- Use MediBid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (*free*), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

Send a note. Pay your share. Always stay alert in prayer.

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Responding to the election results with a Biblical perspective

by Daniel Darling, LifeWay Voices

Whatever the results of the 2020 vote, as Christians let's be thankful, humble, hopeful, and prayerful

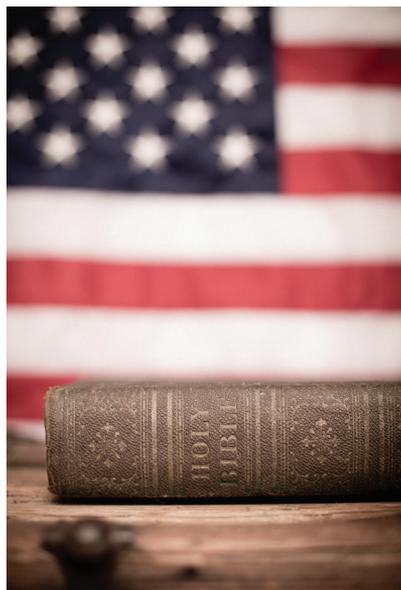
The 2020 elections are coming to an end or, by the time you read this, have ended. To help us process the results as followers of Jesus, we offer this reflection by Pastor Daniel Darling written after the 2018 congressional election. May you be at peace with God's sovereignty and continued faithfulness to you and the Church, whatever the results of the 2020 vote may be.

SO THE POLLS have closed. The ballots have been counted. The returns are in. America has voted. ... The nonstop analysis of why it happened will continue to dominate cable news, newspapers, and websites. Oh, and politics on social media will continue to be mostly unbearable.

But how should Christians react to the election results? Here are four attitudes that should mark our response:

1. Be thankful

Yes, I know elections can be nasty. Politicians often appeal to our basest instincts. TV ads depict opponents in the worst possible light. And everyone argues online for reasons nobody really quite understands.



And yet we should, in some ways, be thankful for the noise and chaos and rancor of our representative republic. It means that our leaders are not put in power by force or by birthright, but by the vote of the people. The partisanship we so often decry is a feature of a free people. Most people around the world have no choice in who leads them. They don't get a vote. Leaders are instead put in power by military might and autocratic rule.

There is much to lament about America's growing incivility, and it could lead, in the future, to increas-

ing instability. When Christians engage in tribal partisanship, it damages our Christian witness. But we should be thankful for the privilege of free elections and the stewardship God has granted us to use our influence to shape the governments that lead us.

2. Be humble

Did your party win? Did the issues you fought for prevail? Celebrate, but react humbly, knowing that elections come and go, the mood of the people rises and falls, and the leader you have so much hope for will, at some point and in some moment, fail you. Resist the urge to make sweeping predictions about how ascendant your party might be. I remember people talking in 2004 about how Republicans were a "permanent majority" only to lose both chambers in 2006. And in 2008, when the Democrats captured the White House, the narrative was that Republicans would never win another election, only to win back Congress in 2010 and the White House in 2016.

If you won on election night, be a gracious winner. Know that some-

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Member Spotlight

Katie Wells | Wellness Mama

by Andie Dill

Member Katie Wells

Web: WellnessMama.com
Facebook [@wellnessmama](https://www.facebook.com/wellnessmama)
Instagram [@wellnessmama](https://www.instagram.com/wellnessmama)

Twitter [@wellnessmama](https://twitter.com/wellnessmama)
Pinterest: [wellnessmama](https://www.pinterest.com/wellnessmama)

JUST A “MOM ON A MISSION,”

Katie Wells had one simple goal: cultivate a lifestyle that would give her children good health and many years of life.

She has turned that goal into a successful blog and podcast called Wellness Mama (wellnessmama.com) that gets 6 to 10 million page views each month, with an additional 2 million views on social media. She has written thousands of blog posts and has developed a podcast by the same name for those who prefer listening.

Wellness Mama's genesis was in 2006. Katie was in the waiting room of her doctor's office for her post-partum checkup. A long wait meant extra time to skim the magazines that lay nearby on the table.

A startling statistic in a copy of Time magazine caught her eye and broke her heart: For the first time in two centuries, the current generation of American children would have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

Children were projected to experience more heart disease, more diabetes, and more cancer.

Katie was not OK with that statistic for her child, or anyone else's child, and set out to do what



Katie Wells

she could to change it.

“It was such a striking moment as I was holding this perfect, tiny newborn, and then reading this article saying that his generation was going to have drastical-

ly higher rates of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and autoimmune disease,” Katie says.

“With this inspiration of looking at my tiny baby, I resolved that day to help change that statistic. I

had no idea how I would do it, but I wanted to help create a world where we could start changing those statistics back.”

Around the same time, Katie started experiencing some strange health concerns of her own. Initially she chalked it up to post-partum symptoms, but as years passed, the issues only got worse, causing deeper problems.

With a background in journalism, Katie’s default is always to begin researching. That began a multiyear effort to not only get to

the bottom of her own health, but to also figure out how she could reverse this dreaded trend projected for her children.

Years later, Katie was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease called Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. By the Lord’s good grace and healing through years of lifestyle change, today her condition is in remission.

Looking back, Katie now recognizes that her lifestyle prior to the start of her mysterious symptoms was a recipe for a major health crash. She was a college student

getting little sleep, eating in the school cafeteria, feeling stress all the time, and, after graduation, immediately getting married and becoming pregnant.

“What a perfect storm for an autoimmune disease,” Katie says.

Katie also says she is grateful for the experience of marrying young and getting pregnant right away.

“I feel like I grew up with my husband, and we grew closer through building a business and building a family in those early

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Why Samaritan Ministries?

KATIE WELLS SAYS joining Samaritan Ministries in 2011 was “a game changer.”

“It was so fun to send a card and a letter personally to a family and pray for them rather than just sending a check to an insurance company,” the woman behind the Wellness Mama blog and podcast says when recalling what she enjoyed most after becoming a Samaritan member.

Before becoming a Samaritan member, Katie was regularly frustrated with being caught up in insurance networks and limited on which providers she could use and what kind of care she could receive.

“It was just a cold, detached system that still required a lot of money in deductibles and co-payments,” Katie says.

The Wells family’s first Samaritan Need was when Seth, her husband, had an appendectomy. Katie was shocked by the \$88,000 discount she was able to negotiate on her husband’s hospital bill just by paying cash and not going through insurance.

Katie also recalls what a blessing it was to

focus on her husband and children during the time of Seth’s hospital stay and not focus on the bills.

Additionally, two of Seth and Katie’s six children were born since the family joined Samaritan.

When Katie was pregnant with her fifth child, she found out at 37 weeks that the child was breech. After already having an emergency C-section with her third child and a successful VBAC with her fourth child, Katie did not want to have another cesarean. Because of the freedom she had in being a Samaritan member and choosing her own provider, Katie “fired” her doctor and “hired” a midwife who had experience delivering over 60 breech babies.

By God’s grace, Gabriella was born safely at home.

“There was no financial worry or dealing with an insurance company. And when I called in to let Samaritan know I was pregnant again, there was only rejoicing together and a time of prayer,” Katie says. ♦♦♦

How to create a homeschool schedule that works

by Katie Wells of Wellness Mama



MANY FAMILIES ARE turning to homeschooling either out of necessity or a desire to create a more custom-fit education that works for their kids. This can be exciting or terrifying, depending on your reasons for beginning and how much the other areas of your life line up with this kind of approach.

One way you can make any homeschooling journey less scary is to set up systems that work.

A good homeschooling schedule is a great way to create structure in your day and make a smooth transition to home education. But

there isn't one schedule that will work for every family.

After many years of trial by fire, here are some of my best tips for creating a homeschool schedule that works for you.

Create a family vision or mission statement

The first thing to do when you're trying to create a homeschooling schedule that works for your family is to figure out what your overall vision is for your homeschool. Having a clear vision to work toward can help you include the most important things in your

homeschool schedule while eliminating unnecessary things.

For my family, we decided to prioritize skills that aren't likely to be outsourced to technology. These include critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and the ability to connect dots where other people don't see them.

When planning our homeschooling schedule, we take these goals into account and make decisions based on how we can best facilitate learning these skills.

To come up with your family vision or mission statement, start by writing down all the reasons you

have chosen to homeschool, all the skills you would like your children to leave home with, and any other characteristics, skills, or rituals that are important to your family.

Using those ideas, write your mission into a few sentences or a bullet point list.

Refer to this mission or vision as you work on your schedule. We've even turned ours into art and have it hanging on the wall.

Set goals

Once you have your vision or mission statement, you can start making goals for the year. Setting goals is a great practice for homeschooling in general, but it can also help you create your schedule.

We set goals for math skills, reading skills, etc., but we don't set arbitrary rules around what constitutes learning. For example, if my child can demonstrate that they know the correct answer to a math problem, I don't require them to show their work or do the work a certain way. We want them to think outside the box, come up with creative solutions, and be innovative, so we encourage that kind of problem-solving.

Goals might look like:

- Learn to write a persuasive essay
- Learn how to give change from a dollar
- Make a plan for a profitable business

Setting goals this way means we can focus on the end product (developing a skill) and not get tripped up and distracted by the "how." There are only so many hours in a day (and so much focus

a child can give!), so we have to be choosy about how we spend our time.

Evaluate your family's needs

Every family is different and has different needs for their schedules. The most important thing you need to do when creating your schedule is to be honest about what suits your family. If you're night owls, don't try to start your day at 8 a.m.! Or if your kids focus better in the morning, make sure you get the basics (reading, writing, and math) out of the way early.

Consider these questions:

- What routines do you already have in place? Are they working for you?
- Do you have work schedules to work around?
- Do your kids have outside activities (dance class, soccer practice, etc.)?

Some families find that schooling in the afternoon or evenings works for them. Others do fewer hours each day but continue school year-round. Another option is to do school for six to eight weeks and then take a break for a week or two.

There are endless possibilities!

If you will be following a public-school schedule (virtual or e-learning), use these principles in the flexible time blocks you have available.

Make it flexible

It doesn't matter so much what you call it (a schedule or a routine) as long as you know you will need to build in flexibility. It's unrealistic to think that you will be able to start math at 9:10 a.m. every day.

When homeschooling, you are typically at home (or at least you start there!) and will have home-related things pop up. The baby is hungry, the dog wants to go out, there are no clean water glasses, so you have to run the dishwasher—there are lots of possible distractions.

I personally like a schedule because it gives me an idea of when certain things might happen, but I don't worry if we get behind. One tip that helps: block out extra time for transitions. For example, if I want to do a lesson for 20 minutes, I block out 30 minutes for it.

If you get frustrated or anxious when you get behind in your schedule, don't schedule! Instead, create a routine so you know what to do next but there aren't any times assigned to those tasks. Your routine might look something like this:

Math
Reading
Writing
Lunch
Science
Art
Soccer practice

Again, you are in charge of what your schedule or routine looks like, so do what works best for your family.

Be realistic

As I mentioned, things pop up during a homeschool day that don't happen during a traditional school day. Don't expect your schedule or routine to be perfect.

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Samaritan Ministries Community posts

Members in our Facebook Group love to tell others about how they've been blessed by the Lord and other Samaritan members. Here are some posts they have made. If you'd like to join, go to facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin to apply for membership.

Stephanie and Brian



JUST GOT A call from the kindest, most compassionate employee of Samaritan ministries. Thank you for your prayers! Join me in asking God for complete healing of my

son Bode's concussion, broken collar bone, and nerve injury in his leg. And praise HIM for protection past, present, and future.

Rachel

MY HUSBAND AND I are both self-employed, so major medical health insurance is beyond expensive for our family! We wouldn't have been able to afford it, so Samaritan has been a life saver for us for the past 5 years. We only get health care when we really need it, but we have kids, so it seems like there's something big nearly every year. Four years ago, my son broke his arm and needed surgery. Three years ago, the same son had pancreatitis and was in the hospital for several days. Most recently, member shares helped us with our son being born in May. In each of these cases, I diligently negotiated as many discounts as I could, but we still would've been stuck making payments on over \$20,000 of our remaining out-of-pocket costs if it weren't for this ministry. We gladly send our shares and special prayer needs every month knowing that we are alleviating similar burdens.



Mackenzie

I JUST WANTED to thank everyone for their support.

My husband and I joined SM a year ago, and our first ever need was maternity. The staff at Samaritan made it so easy to navigate

submitting bills.

The community sent the sweetest notes along with their Shares and the kindest prayers for baby James. We are so grateful to have found this ministry.



Linda

I JOINED SAMARITAN MINISTRIES in April 2019. I just could not afford Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina as a small-business owner. My niece's husband is a life insurance guru. Very smart, researched all health care sharing ministries. Next thing I know his family of 5 has joined Samaritan Ministries. I'm like, "That's good enough for me."

It was very easy to join. I did what I needed to do, chatted with a few of their staff members. So, so nice, and you end with a prayer. How refreshing.

Fast forward to April 2020. I noticed a swollen lymph node under my arm. No big deal. Well, it was. Stage 2 breast cancer. After soaking that in, of course, I was thinking, "Did I make the right decision with Samaritan?"

I was nervous, of course. I called an advocate at Samaritan. He was wonderful! Assured me all would be paid, how it worked, what I needed to do, and, at the end of the call, he said, "My wife had breast cancer, I know where you are at." And then he prayed with me, just what I needed.

A beautiful, heartfelt prayer. I started getting all the tests,



chemo, doctor's appointments. My life was in a whirlwind, but I kept great records and started submitting to Samaritan Ministries.

It's all working. I'm getting Shares coming in so I can pay my bills and the notes I get with the

checks and on PayPal ... unbelievable! And a big thank you to the folks navigating the bills and making the assignments. I'm in awe.

Thank you, Samaritan Ministries. I tell everyone about you."



Sheri

I HAD A cervical discectomy and fusion on December 31. I am so thankful that it was a complete success and even more grateful for the Shares and notes of encour-

agement I received, which allowed me to focus on recovery. This was my first major Need and it went so smoothly. Thanks to all who shared in my medical need.

For more, go to:
facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin

where in your circle there are people who are despairing (see below) the election loss. What's more, hold your victories loosely and your politicians even more loosely. Good leaders can do good things for human flourishing, but they'll never usher in the Kingdom of God. And one day the leaders who dominate the headlines will be a footnote in your grandchildren's history books.

3. Be hopeful

Did your party lose? Did some issues you fought for go down to defeat? It's good to mourn when good leaders lose and issues that affect our neighbors' flourishing are not victorious at the ballot box. But don't give in to despair and cynicism.

I remember, as a young man, sitting in a sad ballroom expecting a victory party and instead listening to my candidate give a concession speech. I remember saying foolish things like "America is finished!" Now I look back and realize that, not only did the world not end when my guy lost, the country didn't do as bad as I imagined. Everything was really OK.

I'm not minimizing the importance of elections, but as a Christian I have to put my faith not in a party or a politician or a program but in Christ. If Jesus is truly the rightful King of the universe, if He

has conquered sin and death and the grave, if He is not up in heaven wringing His hands over exit polls, why should I wring mine?

4. Be prayerful

We may be uncertain about what the immediate future holds after this election, but we are certain about our responsibility as followers of Jesus. Paul commands Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:2 to pray for all of those in authority. Imagine if we prayed as much as we tweeted or texted or posted about politics?

And, in a post-election environment, we should pray specifically both for the leaders who have been voted out of office and those who are newly elected. For every member of Congress going home and worrying about his or her next career move, there are dozens of staffers, mostly underpaid, wondering about their future.

We should also pray for those who have freshly been given power. ... This is a new time of scrutiny and responsibility. Let's pray they steward this well and work to put in place policies that respect the dignity of every human being and advance the flourishing of our communities. We should pray earnestly, not only for those with whom we agree but also for those with whom we disagree. For we

know nobody assumes leadership by accident. God allows in power those whom He wills (Romans 13). He is in control and can shape the hearts of rulers (Proverbs 21:1).

Ultimately, though we work to shape our communities by participating in elections, we know that America is but a blip on the radar screen of history, a history God is gathering to Himself. And while we should join institutions and make voting decisions, we are ultimately strangers and foreigners, uncomfortable in any earthly movement. And one day we will dwell in a more perfect city, one whose "builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). ♦♦

Daniel Darling is a bestselling author, pastor, and podcast host. He is the senior vice president of Communications for NRB. His new book is *A Way With Words: Using Our Online Conversations for Good*.

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Member Letter

THE LORD'S PRESENCE
HAS SURROUNDED US

We've been so blessed spiritually and financially by the Body of Christ through Samaritan members this

past month.

We have felt the Lord's presence and comfort surround us during our time of need. We are so grateful for the many prayers and the support we have received. Each of these members has greatly encouraged us

in the Lord through prayer, Scripture, and financial gifts.

Thank you for praying for our Special Prayer Need! We serve an awesome and gracious God!

**Mark & Crystal
ILLINOIS**

Overscheduling and trying to “do it all” is a recipe for disaster.

We follow the 80/20 rule, which says that 20 percent of actions equal 80 percent of results. Because we want our kids to learn those skills I mentioned above (over skills that may be irrelevant in 20 years), we make them a priority.

I know that we won't be able to do everything in our homeschool, so by prioritizing those 20 percent skills, we are making sure that our kids will be ready for the future world.

Draft your schedule

Now's the time to write down a schedule for your family. Start by coming up with a yearly calendar. You can use a planner or just a simple wall calendar. Many families follow the local public-school calendar to make it easy for kids to see their public-schooled friends. Others will create their own yearly calendar.

Mark the days you won't be doing school because of holidays or family vacations. If your state requires a certain number of days of school, now is the time to plan those out (hint: plan for a few extra in case of illness).

Now it's time to come up with a basic weekly schedule. You can quickly make a weekly schedule with a pencil and paper or you can use other tools like Excel or calendar apps. Add in the outside activities like co-op classes or sports practices first. Next, include work schedules and other commitments.

Then you can start working in school blocks. I always recommend prioritizing reading, writing, and math every day. Then once or twice

a week you can add in geography, history, science, arts, etc. For older kids (middle and high school) you may need to do those “extra” subjects a few additional times throughout the week based on your goals.

Ease into your schedule

Many families are concerned that their kids won't like their new routine at home. I recently chatted with our Wellness Mama editor, Carrie Husse, on the podcast since she is a long-time homeschooling mom of three. She recommends easing into your schedule instead of jumping in suddenly. This helps kids to adjust to the new schedule with less resistance.

Here's what works for her:

- Start working on just your morning routines a few weeks before you want to start school. Streamline wake-up times, breakfast, and chores. This is half the battle and sets up a successful day.
- Ease into subjects by choosing one to start with and adding the others in as you build new habits to support your new routine.

(Listen to the full podcast with Carrie at wellnessmama.com/podcast/carrie-husse/)

Be prepared to make changes

No matter how much thought you put into your homeschooling schedule, you will inevitably need to make changes. Depending on kids' ages, work schedules, and other commitments, your schedule may change every year or even every few months.

You may also find that, without the confines of traditional school, your family's natural schedule emerges and surprises you. Maybe afternoons are your favorite time to read together while math is great just before lunch. Follow what works for your family and adjust as needed. ♦♦♦

Katie Wells is the creator of the Wellness Mama blog (wellnessmama.com) and podcast as well as the author of *The Wellness Mama 5-Step Lifestyle Detox: The Essential DIY Guide to a Healthier, Cleaner, All-Natural Life* and *The Wellness Mama Cookbook: 200 Easy-to-Prepare Recipes and Time-Saving Advice for the Busy Cook*.

Homeschool resources

We asked members of the Samaritan Ministries Community Facebook Group for resources for new homeschoolers. Here are some of their suggestions:

- rainbowresource.com
- readaloudrevival.com
- home-school.com
- hsllda.org
- simplycharlottemason.com
- lifeabundantlyblog.com
- libraryanded.com
- khanacademy.org
- classicalconversations.com
- cathyduffyreviews.com
- allinonehomeschool.com
- amblesideonline.org
- bewildandfree.org
- higherupandfurtherin.blogspot.com
- thehomeschoolmom.com
- readingeggs.com
- schoolhouseteachers.com
- masterbooks.com

Other suggestions included state-specific groups and Facebook Groups. ♦♦♦

ples of faith and an inspiration to us. Every day we hear stories of your perseverance through difficult trials, and your trust in God's faithfulness and goodness is exemplary. You work hard to steward the Lord's resources in this community, all while going through these trials! We all know how difficult navigating the health care industry can be, and yet you work through those challenges with grace.

We see Jesus in you and that gives us such hope, not only for Samaritan Ministries but also for what God is doing throughout His Church.

Your enthusiastic participation in our Samaritan Ministries Community Facebook Group is another blessing that is easy to give thanks for this year. More than 4,700 members in this group are learning from one another and encouraging one another on a variety of topics, from dealing with health care providers and good health practices to applying faith to life's many challenges. It has been a great encouragement to see the Body of Christ in action in this new way. If you haven't joined yet, you're missing out on a wonderful blessing!

It is also easy to give thanks for our strategic relationship with Healthcare Bluebook that has borne fruit in new ways this year. We are grateful for Healthcare Bluebook's ability to leverage data that gives power back to patients in a system that far too often lacks transparency. We are so thankful members have enthusiastically engaged in our new fair-price reward initiative, already saving more than \$2 million since July 1!

We are also very thankful that this month we are seeing the official public release of our newest sharing program, Samaritan Given. For many years, members have requested a completely online billing and sharing experience, including a mobile phone app, and we are thankful to God that we've been able to launch it. We are encouraged to see that there were more than 500 new starts in Samaritan Given in October.

We see Jesus in you and that gives us such hope, not only for Samaritan Ministries but also for what God is doing throughout His Church.

"In all circumstances ..."

Looking back on 2020, there were also some very difficult times, starting with the challenges that COVID-19 brought. But we thank God for His sovereign and good purposes even for the difficult circumstances, and we ask Him for eyes of faith to see those purposes unfolding.

When the COVID-19 social distancing regulations hit, like so many other organizations, we faced the severe restrictions on in-person work. We're thankful that God had already been leading

us to develop our remote workforce infrastructure. By His grace, in less than one week we were able to transition 90 percent of our staff to work remotely both safely and securely. We're thankful for all the hard work our IT team put in so that we could keep serving members without interruption. We're grateful that you were gracious with us as we made adjustments to how we serve you, including in our request that you utilize more self-service options on the Samaritan Dashboard.

As if COVID-19 weren't enough, for the first half of 2020 this Samaritan community faced an ever-widening gap between bills submitted and available Shares. At the same time, many members were experiencing financial difficulty because of COVID-19.

According to our historical pattern, when facing a trend of more bills submitted than available Shares, we would normally have prorated during March, April, May, and June. In recognition of the significant COVID-induced disruptions in our health care system, economy, and lives, we implemented contingency plans, including directing \$1.5 million in administrative funds toward Needs. We also extended the time allowed for negotiations on Needs, but the total amount in negotiation rose to \$15 million.

We proposed a Share increase in July for Classic and then experienced what turned out to be the most dramatic decline in Need submissions that we have seen in Samaritan's 26-year history. Not only were we able to finalize

negotiations on most Needs from previous months, but in August, September, and October there were enough Shares to meet all the Needs. Praise be to God! As we head into the holidays, please do remember to submit your bills in a timely fashion, so that we can wisely utilize this opportunity and the available Shares with which God has blessed us.

We're thankful for how members are facing these challenging times in faith. We're thankful for how you have engaged on the issues with good questions and very helpful feedback. We're thankful we've caught up on sharing one another's burdens. We're thankful that, even if we face a post-COVID surge of bills in the future, we can address that challenge together as the Body of Christ. We're thankful that COVID-19 has caused us to take a closer look at our administrative budget for more ways to conserve.

And, as hard as it may be at times, we're thankful that in His love God prunes His people and this ministry, but He does so in order to prepare each of us for a new season of greater fruitfulness (John 15:1-11).

Even though 2020 hasn't gone as any of us would have preferred, by God's grace we will persevere in faith and give God the glory. Indeed, we have so much to be thankful for. As we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, we need to go beyond counting our earthly blessings and remember the spiritual riches that are ours in Christ:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every

spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1:3-10).

We pray that each of our celebrations of Thanksgiving with family, friends, and local churches would strengthen our faith and remind us of the numerous blessings God has graciously given us. ♦♦♦

Member Letters

GRATITUDE FOR SHARING HOSPITAL COSTS BY MEMBERS

My journey through triple-bypass surgery was and continues to be a journey of blessings from the Lord. The surgery and hospital stay went well. I have never been on the "receiving end" of prayer on this level before. The Lord showed Himself strong in answering prayer for healing and recovery and providing for every need.

I am grateful for fellow members sharing in our part of the cost. I am grateful that the hospital wrote off \$117,008 of the bill (without our asking for it).

Needs are met, bills paid, healing going well, and joy unspeakable and full of glory to the Lord Jesus Christ!!

**Edward
FLORIDA**

'I HAVE WEPT MORE THAN ONCE'

I have been amazed and overwhelmed at the beautiful spiritual connection I feel as a recipient of member Shares for financial needs regarding colon cancer. You would, I'm sure, feel the same way to read a card or letter from a complete stranger (but who is a true sister or brother in Christ) that includes a prayer, advice, or your very favorite scripture!

I have wept more than once this summer, simply overcome by the love and so grateful for the financial Shares.

May the Lord prosper this outstanding ministry of His dear Body.

**Carolyn
TENNESSEE**

years that can be so tough, together,” Katie says.

Since 2006, blogging has become one of the most fulfilling aspects of Katie’s life after her role as wife and mother. She says when writing, her goal is to “take really complex topics and make them easy to understand and actionable for moms, which would in turn pay off for families.”

“Every blog post strives to answer a single question that moms can easily implement without adding stress to their lives,” Katie says.

Over the years, Katie has both regained her own health and provided a healthy foundation for her children, all the while “watching an amazing community of millions of moms who also really care about changing the statistic for their kids, everybody else’s kids, and for future society as a whole.”

“I have always thought that moms are the most powerful force on the planet,” Katie says. “Anything you can do to help them and make their lives easier has ripple effects not just to their immediate families, but also through society. I want to help give moms back more time and more bandwidth.”

“Moms are shaping the next generation and are controlling so much of the purchasing power, so that when they make changes, society listens,” Katie declares.

When asked her vision for Wellness Mama, Katie says she ultimately wants to give people a foundation to stand on and building blocks to figure out what the best variables are for them. She is sure to preface any health advice she

KATIE WELLS’ GOAL as Wellness Mama has never been to add to moms’ plates, but to simplify. Over her 14 years as a blogger and podcaster, she has learned that less is more.

“There is always a new glitzy thing that has come out to try, or thousands of supplements that you’re told you ‘need,’ but the most important and most effective things come from things that already need to be done in any given day—getting enough of the good kind of fuel, staying hydrated, getting good sleep, and cultivating good relationships,” Katie says.

For those who are just getting started, Katie suggests some basic ways to incorporate wellness while working on a tight budget.

1. You can make most of the things you need for your home, such as cleaning products and personal care items, relatively inexpensively, saving money.
2. We all have to consume calories to live. Build meals around less expensive fresh foods, such as seasonal vegetables.
3. Our bodies are so responsive to light. Get outside for at least 30 minutes soon after waking. This will trigger a cascade of circadian hormones that help you be more alert, focused, and calm during the day, and to sleep better at night.
4. For a good night’s sleep, do not use screens for at least two hours before bedtime. “Blue light suppresses melatonin up to 80 percent,” Katie says.

gives by saying that there is a very personalized aspect to health.

“We are all unique and created to move toward a natural state of health,” Katie says. “So I ask myself, ‘What variables can I remove or add to move my body to where it already wants to be?’

“I have so much hope now when I think about that original statistic. If we have this many moms working toward the same goal, then we will change the outcome,” Katie says.

Katie has an inherent curiosity

about every person she meets.

“You can gain wisdom from almost anyone and their own journeys,” she states. However, Katie also stresses the fact that someone else’s system might not work for you.

“At the end of the day, we are all responsible for our own health.” Katie says. ♦♦♦

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

More Christians released from Eritrean prisons

Praise God that 31 Christians have been released from prison in Eritrea on bail for unconfirmed reasons, although it is believed to be as a result of COVID-19, different sources report. The men and women had been detained without charge or trial for years. The action follows the release of 22 Christians from a different prison in July. However, it is believed that 300 to 3,000 Christians remain imprisoned for their faith. *Thank God that these believers have been released. Pray that more will be freed in the months to come and that those still in prison will be treated humanely.*

Summer camp raided, shut down in China

A church-run summer camp was shut down in China on August 23 because it had not been given proper authorization, Voice of the Martyrs-Canada reports. A church in Gushi had organized the camp. Personal and church property was confiscated, and the pastor and his wife were detained. Citizens in Gushi who report non-approved religious events to the government are rewarded with cash. *Pray that the camp organizers will recover their belongings and find ways to serve those in their midst without government interference.*

Christian sentenced to hanging on blasphemy charges

A Pakistani court has recently sentenced a Christian man to three years in prison followed by hanging, VOM-C says. In 2013, Asif Pervaiz sent text messages resisting his employer's demand to convert to Islam and was accused of blasphemy. *Pray that Asif's death sentence will be commuted, and he will be released to safety.*

Chinese prison authorities deny Bible to prisoner

A Chinese human rights lawyer has been denied access to a Bible as well as a book of Bible stories by his detention center, International Christian Concern says. Authorities told his wife that they were concerned that Qin Yongpei would use the books to "spread the Gospel in prison." *Pray that Qin will gain access to Scripture and be able to use it to share the Good News of Christ.*



Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

HEBREWS 13:3

Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer.

Each month, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:

International Christian Concern
persecution.org
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor
worldwatchmonitor.org

**The Spirit helps us in our weakness ...
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints
according to the will of God.
Romans 8:26-27**

THE DOORPOST

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; 11:18-21



Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words. And he Who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

ROMANS 8:26-27

We are spiritually weak, not even knowing what we ought to pray. How often do we fail to pray because we are uncertain of exactly what God's will is or what we should say?

Thankfully, the Spirit helps us. He intercedes for us according to the will of God with groanings that words cannot express. God has promised to do anything we ask according to His will (1 John 5:14-15).

When the Spirit intercedes for us, our prayers and even our wordless groanings are answered by the Father according to His will.



For the Kingdom,
Ray King

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Ray King". The signature is fluid and cursive.