

**Annie
Armstrong**
Easter
Offering®



UNITED

CALLED TO BE ONE

2023
PRAYER GUIDE
Week of Prayer for
North American Missions



UNITED

CALLED TO BE ONE

“If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

Philippians 2:1-2 (CSB)



There's amazing diversity among the people who live across the United States and Canada, yet as Christians, we're united by a common purpose—to reach our neighbors and beyond with the gospel. That need has never been greater in North America.

This week you'll read about missionaries reaching Native Americans in South Dakota, Romanians in New York and more stories of missionaries serving in communities with great gospel need. But these missionaries do not serve alone. They have a support system of millions of Southern Baptists like you. Your prayers this week and beyond make you an essential part of their mission team.

To see even more of these missionaries' stories and how your prayers are making an impact, visit the link to each featured video. And, to receive weekly missionary prayer requests all year, sign up at namb.net/Pray.

371 million people
in North America

350 languages

281 million without the
hope of the gospel



DAY 1

KAY BENNETT

New Orleans, Louisiana

Human trafficking emergencies don't happen on schedule, so there's no such thing as an "average day" for Kay Bennett, director of Send Relief's Baptist Friendship House.

"The doorbell or phone can ring and change my whole day," says Kay. Chances are that day was already filled with serving meals to those experiencing homelessness, handing out hygiene supplies, leading Bible study, managing training programs and more.

It's this loosely controlled ministry chaos that's most familiar to Kay.

"I have often said I found a home with the homeless," she says. "My call from the beginning was to minister to hurting people." There's no shortage of hurting people in the French Quarter of New Orleans. People living on the streets are typically dealing with trauma and are vulnerable to being trafficked.

Kay says the way to help people in desperate need is to see each one as an individual with a unique story and come alongside to listen and walk with them. "God never gives up on us, so we can never give up on anyone else."

PRAY FOR

- People experiencing homelessness to be drawn to Baptist Friendship House for help.
- Human trafficking victims to be able to escape exploitation.
- Strength and encouragement for staff and volunteers.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Bennett



DAY 2

VERGIL & KELSEY BROWN

Portland, Oregon

Oregon is one of the least-churched states in the nation. It's where Vergil and Kelsey Brown planted one successful church in Portland and after 10 years, felt God's call to leave it in the hands of a new pastor and plant again.

The family moved to a part of the city that might as well have been another world away—especially for the couple's kids. For people in the Brown's community, Christians are an oddity.

"Most of our neighbors do not know a single Christian, but they ask questions. We quickly had to get comfortable with that. God is leading them to Christ through relationships," says Vergil.

The Browns started with a home prayer group that quickly grew into Redemption Church.

The church is now growing in attendance and baptisms and hopes to soon launch additional church plants.

"I'm hooked on church planting now and just doing bold things for Jesus," says Vergil. "It was scary. It was really scary, but we're so glad we did it."

PRAY FOR

- Redemption Church to be faithful and bold in their evangelism efforts.
- Unity in the growing young church.
- Joy in the journey for the Brown family.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Brown



DAY 3

SAM & JOANNA CHOI

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Twin Cities area has the largest Somali population outside of Somalia. It is home to the largest Hmong population in the United States, and the Hispanic population has grown by 38% in a decade.

“Although you have different ethnicities and backgrounds in our city, they’re all pocketed and avoid each other,” says church planting missionary Sam Choi of All Peoples Church. But All Peoples Church sets a different example—unity from diversity.

The ministry focus is on the unchurched. It takes patience to disciple new believers whose new faith means major life change. Outreach strategies have included engaging visitors at the Mall of America and regular meals at the park to build relationships.

Sam says the goal is not to get people to the church for a pastor to share the gospel but for the church members to go out and look for intentional encounters.

“We’re only blocks from George Floyd Square where he tragically died. Having a truly multi-ethnic church here will be challenging but a powerful witness,” says Sam.

PRAY FOR

- Growth in numbers to be matched with spiritual maturity.
- Faithfulness to the mission to reach the nations in Minneapolis.
- Church to be an everyday experience that doesn’t begin and end in a building.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Choi



DAY 4

PHILIP & ANDI COLEMAN

Anchorage, Alaska

Alaska has a rugged, forbidding environment. That's also true for churches. Thirty percent of Alaskan Southern Baptist churches have died in the last six years.

Philip and Andi Coleman uprooted their lives in Kentucky and moved to Anchorage determined to change that statistic.

After taking the helm of church plant True North Church, Philip learned about an older church that was dying. It had a building and little else, but the remaining members wanted a new start. So, the young community of True North Church and the older congregants of Muldoon Road Baptist Church merged to serve their community as one.

Now, Philip is helping others learn how to reach the unique culture and extreme climate of Alaska. He has started a strategic residency program for church planters so the next six years of church growth in Alaska will look different from the last.

“I don't think there's a seminary or a residency anywhere else that can get you completely ready for Alaska,” says Philip. “You need to be here for a year or more to know this place.”

PRAY FOR

- The Colemans as they reach a culture that doesn't see a need for Jesus.
- The residency to grow new missionaries to reach Alaska.
- Strong relationships with local Alaska associations.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Coleman



DAY 5

EMANUEL & IOANA GROZEA

Ridgewood, New York

Emanuel Grozea was born in communist Romania to a family of smugglers—Bible smugglers. As a teenager, Emanuel felt God calling him into ministry. He pastored for almost a decade in Romania before God moved him and his family to lead a Romanian Baptist church on the verge of closing in New York City. In the Ridgewood community, about half of the neighborhood speaks a language other than English and once was heavily populated with Romanian immigrants.

“God gave us a burden—a vision for what it needs to be in our generation. Our vision is to replant and transition this church from a struggling Romanian church to a House of Worship for all nations,” says Emanuel.

Leading the Maranatha Baptist Church congregation through such a radical change has been challenging. But now, the church is reaching and welcoming Albanian, Nepali, Polish, Latino, Egyptian, Italian, Turkish and Armenian neighbors, along with Romanians. The language groups meet individually for Sunday school and then come together for corporate worship to joyfully worship as one.

PRAY FOR

- Faithfulness in sharing the gospel to all nations in the community.
- Maranatha to plant three new churches by 2030.
- More supporting churches to partner with Maranatha in prayer and serving.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Grozea



DAY 6

MATT & AMANDA HADDEN

Porcupine, South Dakota

When Matt went to the Pine Ridge Reservation, home of the Oglala Lakota tribe, for a short-term, construction mission trip, his plan to be an international missionary changed.

“I looked around and saw tremendous need,” says Matt. “I could hear people speaking a different language. I had entered a different culture and was in the middle of a different people group right here in my own country. These people had been forgotten and I knew God was calling me here.”

Pine Ridge is one of the largest reservations in the United States and among the poorest. Matt and Amanda lead the Čhaŋkú Wašté Ranch, a ministry center on the reservation. Their three-lane approach is through a summer kids camp, providing free home repair and offering medical services through a newly opened clinic.

“I have read that less than 3% of Oglala Lakota people claim to know the Lord,” says Matt. “Our goal is to change that statistic and help them experience the hope of a restored life in every aspect.”

PRAY FOR

- Wisdom to meet the many needs of the Oglala Lakota people.
- Continued favor and partnerships with tribal leaders.
- Growth and support for wellness and construction ministries.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Hadden



DAY 7

MATTHEW & RUTH LAHEY

St. John's, Newfoundland

More than a hundred years before Matthew and Ruth Lahey came here as church planters, the last church in the Kilbride neighborhood of St. John's burned to the ground and was never rebuilt.

“For many Newfoundlanders, the idea of church is bound up in a building: church is something you go to, not what you are,” says Matthew. So, when the building was destroyed, so was the church.

It's in this melting pot of traditions, progressivism, liberalism and misconceptions of Christianity that the Laheys are planting Kilbride Community Church.

“What we're doing is frontier missions. We're in a community that hasn't had the gospel in it since 1892, or maybe worse, has had a perverted version of the gospel,” says Matthew.

Church planting here is not a quick process, but the Laheys are committed. “Christianity isn't something reserved for 90 minutes on Sunday,” says Ruth. “Everything we do is an opportunity to minister to and reach our community—all for Christ's glory.”

PRAY FOR

- God to open eyes and soften hearts of people towards the gospel in St. John's.
- Kilbride Community Church to represent Christ well in an apathetic environment.
- God to raise up more workers to come into this harvest.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Lahey



DAY 8

ANGEL & VANESA VIVEROS

Lincoln, Nebraska

The Viveros family had no plans to leave Mexico City where Angel was a local pastor. Then they heard about the great need in the U.S. Midwest. Angel and Vanesa felt God calling them more than 1,700 miles away to minister to immigrants—in Lincoln, Nebraska.

“The impulse in our hearts is to be missionaries, and the Midwest is greatly lacking in ministry to Hispanics” says Angel.

The Viveros family is planting Cosecha Iglesia Bíblica in a vibrant, multicultural community. Angel says it’s a place that needs the true gospel in the face of a growing prosperity gospel presence.

The church is a source of community by intentionally sharing the gospel while meeting physical needs with wellness clinics, English classes and family friendly events. They’ve even gained a reputation in the community—if there’s an event where people are being served, Cosecha Iglesia Bíblica is right in the middle of it.

Angel says that he, Vanesa and their young daughter, Zuri, are a team and that is their strength. “I’m not just a pastor with a family. We each have a place to serve and create relationships.”

PRAY FOR

- The Spanish-speaking community in Lincoln, Nebraska, to find community and gospel hope at Cosecha Iglesia Bíblica.
- Outreach opportunities to build relationships.
- People to understand the true gospel and be rescued from the prosperity gospel.

Watch the story at AnnieArmstrong.com/Viveros

Your gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering support North American missionaries.

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