

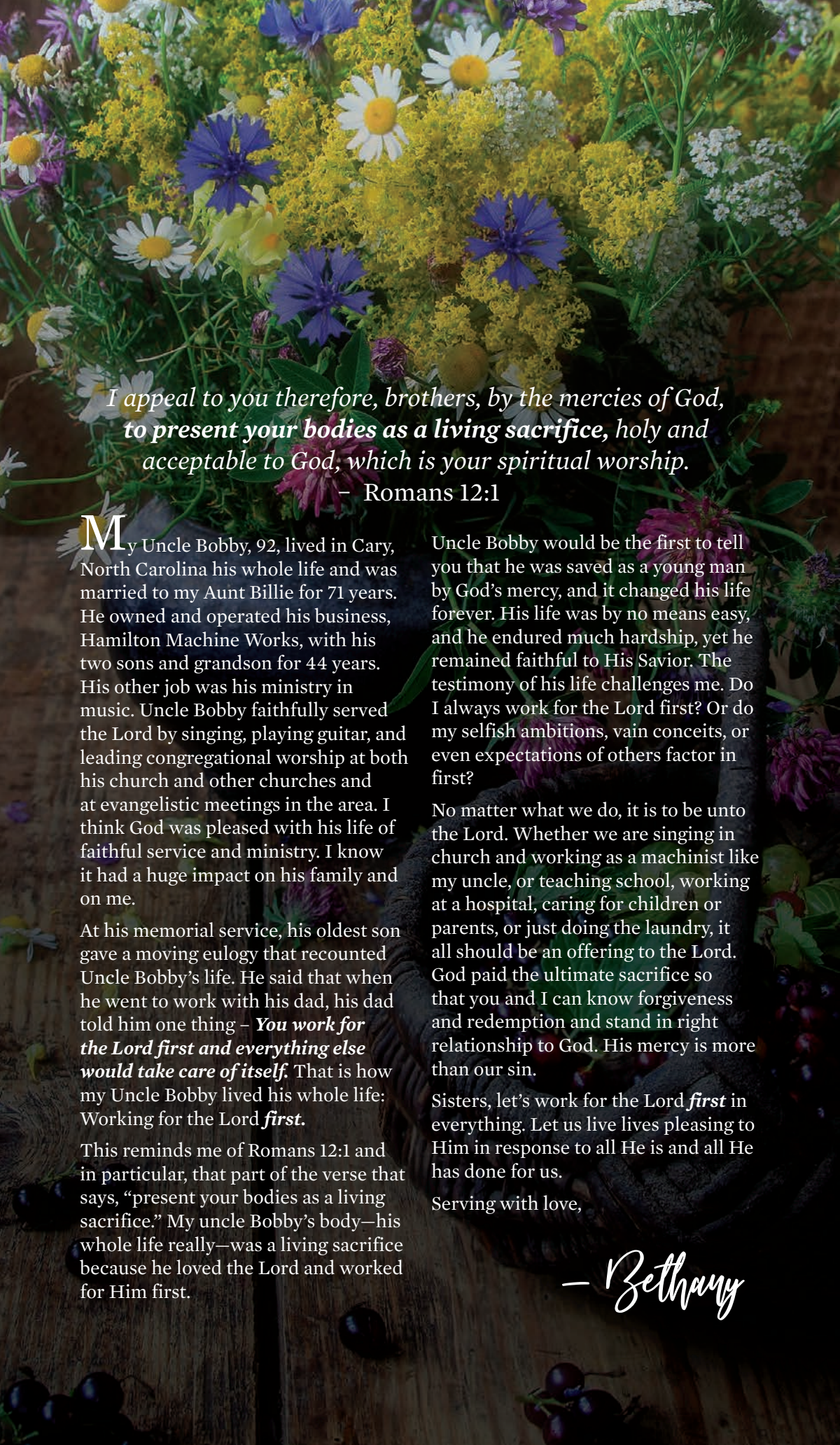
# GATHER

WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER FROM  IMMANUEL BIBLE CHURCH



helping  
each other grow





*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,  
to present your **bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and  
acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

– Romans 12:1

**M**y Uncle Bobby, 92, lived in Cary, North Carolina his whole life and was married to my Aunt Billie for 71 years. He owned and operated his business, Hamilton Machine Works, with his two sons and grandson for 44 years. His other job was his ministry in music. Uncle Bobby faithfully served the Lord by singing, playing guitar, and leading congregational worship at both his church and other churches and at evangelistic meetings in the area. I think God was pleased with his life of faithful service and ministry. I know it had a huge impact on his family and on me.

At his memorial service, his oldest son gave a moving eulogy that recounted Uncle Bobby's life. He said that when he went to work with his dad, his dad told him one thing – **You work for the Lord first and everything else would take care of itself.** That is how my Uncle Bobby lived his whole life: Working for the Lord **first**.

This reminds me of Romans 12:1 and in particular, that part of the verse that says, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice.” My uncle Bobby's body—his whole life really—was a living sacrifice because he loved the Lord and worked for Him first.

Uncle Bobby would be the first to tell you that he was saved as a young man by God's mercy, and it changed his life forever. His life was by no means easy, and he endured much hardship, yet he remained faithful to His Savior. The testimony of his life challenges me. Do I always work for the Lord first? Or do my selfish ambitions, vain conceits, or even expectations of others factor in first?

No matter what we do, it is to be unto the Lord. Whether we are singing in church and working as a machinist like my uncle, or teaching school, working at a hospital, caring for children or parents, or just doing the laundry, it all should be an offering to the Lord. God paid the ultimate sacrifice so that you and I can know forgiveness and redemption and stand in right relationship to God. His mercy is more than our sin.

Sisters, let's work for the Lord **first** in everything. Let us live lives pleasing to Him in response to all He is and all He has done for us.

Serving with love,

– Bethany



# Women's Conference



*with Guest Speaker*

COURTNEY DOCTOR

March 17-18, 2023

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

ROMANS 12:1



Register: [ibc.church/mercy](https://ibc.church/mercy)

Registration closes on March 15.

# Quotes from Previous Women's Conferences

*Lexi*

“ [I love] having the chance to serve with women I otherwise may not have the opportunity to meet! ”

**KATIE:**

*The speaker's teaching led me to a deeper personal study of scripture while helping me draw out relevant and Biblically accurate practical application.*

**ANGIE**

*The conferences provide “practical, rubber - meet the road-wisdom” for me.*

*I am looking forward to the speaker this year because our ABF just finished her book.*

“

**INGRID:**

*How refreshing to be reminded that the only thing Christ requires of us is a heart that loves Him and wishes to know Him. He is sufficient - no measuring up required.*

**Alyssa:**

**I am very excited to have quality time with women from Immanuel! The conference is such an encouragement in seeing women in all different walks of life gather together. I especially love getting to worship!**

**Laura**

To be united in our love for Jesus is rich and wonderful.  
[When we] worship Him and study His word together, God most certainly is glorified.

“

**JANICE:**

**I've always enjoyed the focused sisterhood. I enjoy serving together with my friends!**

“

**Ann**

*I've always liked how the IBC Women's Retreat means that I have time carved out to grow in my relationship with Him. I always come away having had some life-changing breakthrough in my faith walk. The laughter, giveaways and fellowship with long-time and new friends is icing on the cake.*





# Every Moment Holy: A Review

By Sarah Fite

Last December, my husband and I attended a Christmas party for our ABE and, per usual, the hilarity of a White Elephant gift exchange ensued. The previous year we'd left with a box of lightbulbs, a random plug, and some gourmet salts. Pretty standard fair for a White Elephant gift. As numbers were called and gifts went round, we weren't expecting much different.

When someone unwrapped a mini cast iron pan and a copy of *Every Moment Holy*, my husband perked up. The book struck me as familiar, but I couldn't quite place it. My husband was mostly interested in the mini cast iron pan, and my White Elephant motto is the known is often better than the unknown. So, when my number was called, I stole the pan and book for the second time, officially rendering it dead and claiming them as our own.

We opened the book and realized it was a collection of liturgies. The title sounded familiar to me because it was published by Rabbit Room Press, which was started by singer-songwriter Andrew Peterson. Upon our return home that night, we opened it up and began reading through some of the liturgies. Nearly two hours later, we knew this book was special, and one we'd be reaching for again and again.

If you're anything like me, improving your prayer life is often an aim. May-

be you've read books on the topic, as I have, committed to challenges, or tried to come up with "hacks" to make praying easier and more engrained in your day-to-day life.

Perhaps, also like me, you sometimes struggle to pray more than just "the same old, same old." You get frustrated when your prayers feel surface level or like they constantly devolve into a laundry list of requests. If you're looking for a way to deepen your prayer life and be reminded of the sacredness of *all* of life, *Every Moment Holy* may be just what you're looking for.

Similar to other titles you may be familiar with, such as *The Valley of Vision* or *The Book of Common Prayer*, *Every Moment Holy* is filled with beautiful liturgies for countless moments of our lives, some obviously momentous and some painfully mundane.

In his foreword, Andrew Peterson says, "...this book reminds us that there are no unsacred moments; there are only sacred moments and moments we have forgotten are sacred. If that's true, then it is our duty to reclaim the sacredness of our lives, of life itself. And the first step is to remember—to remember the dream of Eden that shimmers at the edges of things, to remember that the madman on the corner was made in God's image, to remember that work and play and suffering and celebration are all sentences in a good story being

told by God, a story arcing its way to a new creation. By remembering the holiness of each moment we banish that old Gnostic ghost and thwart its lie that there's nothing holy about flesh and bone, soil and stone, work and pleasure and all tangible, tactile, visible things."

The liturgies, written by Douglas Kaine McKelvey, were crafted with immense care and are filled with beautiful language that stirs the heart, brings tears to the eye, and truly reminds us of the sacredness and beauty of every single moment on this earth God has created.

There are liturgies crafted for different vocations—employees, bosses, students, first responders, performers, and fiction writers. Liturgies for domestic days, the washing of windows, laundering, paying bills, and home repairs—moments so simple and ordinary we so easily forget their sacredness, and that God is at work in and through us in those moments too.

There are liturgies for the first snow, sunsets, arriving at the ocean, and planting flowers—beautiful opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the Lord's creation. Liturgies for setting up a Christmas tree, for feasting with friends, moving into a new home, and the marking of birthdays—those big moments worthy of much joy and celebration.

There are liturgies to pray before consuming media, serving others, eating a meal alone, giving, and shopping—opportunities to rightly orient our heart when sin can easily slip in and entangle. Liturgies for the hours, of the moment, and table blessings for each day.

When I changed my son's diaper and cleaned poop out of pajamas for the fourth time in a week, my thoughts were drawn to the closing words of

### *A Liturgy for Changing Diapers I:*

*Open my eyes that I might see this act  
for what it is from the fixed vantage of  
eternity, O Lord—*

*how the changing of a diaper might  
sit upstream of the changing of a heart;  
how the changing of a heart might  
sit upstream of the changing of the world.*

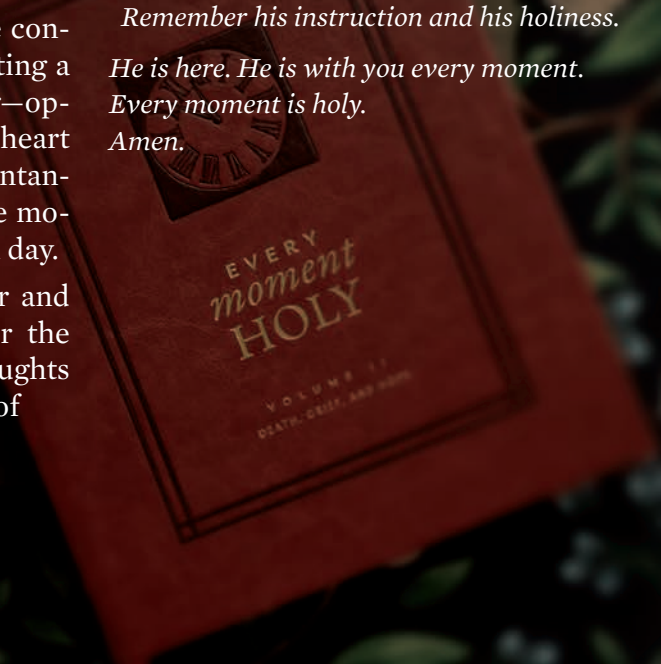
*Amen.*

Changing a diaper may possibly be one of the most mundane tasks, often filled with frustration and drudgery. But this beautiful prayer, filled with words I never would have thought or said on my own, reorient my heart and remind me that my role and responsibility as a mother is good and holy work... even the changing of a diaper.

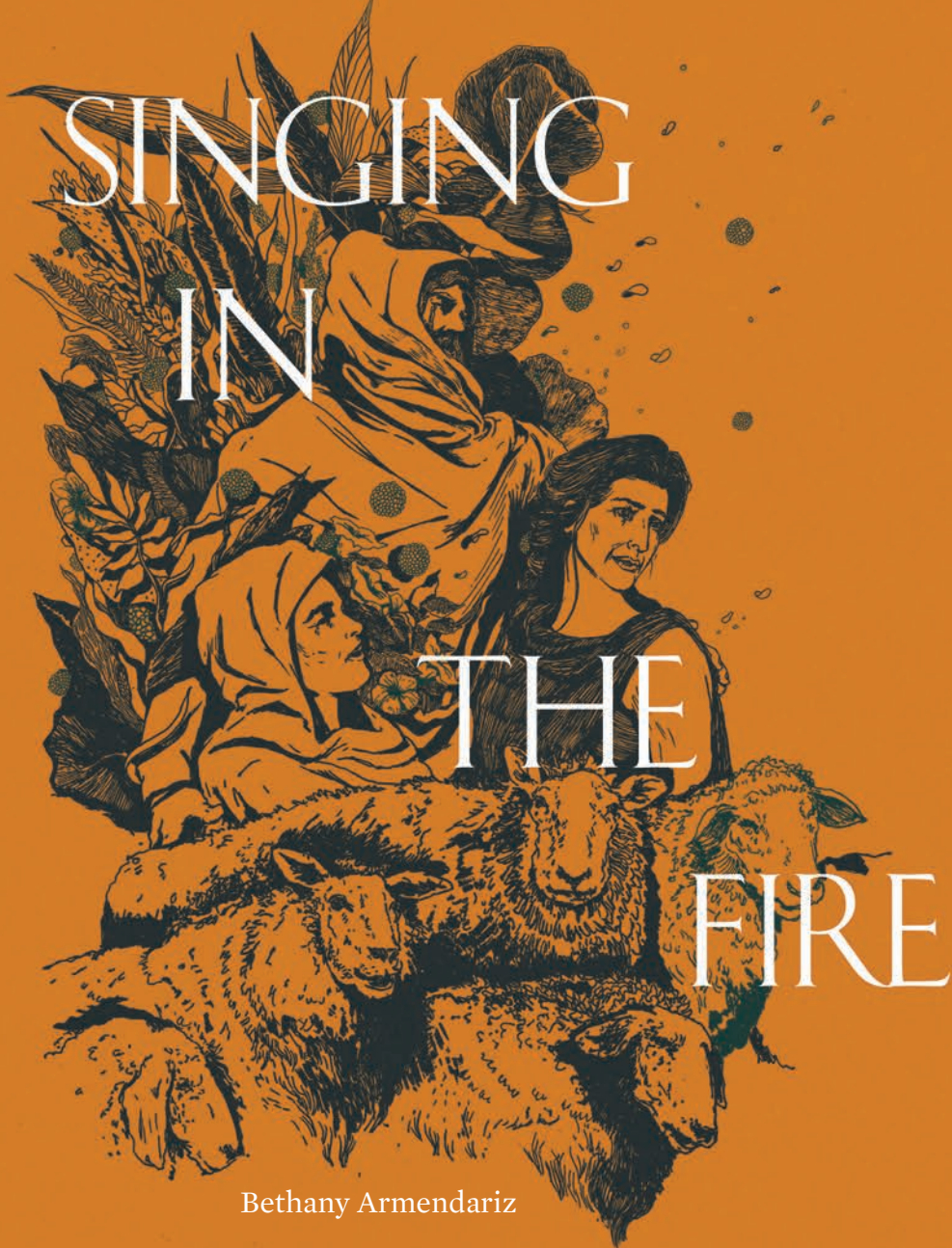
Perhaps this book will do what it has done for me—give depth to your prayers, give words to desires of your heart, and orient your heart to remember that every single moment, from when you open your eyes to when you close them, no matter what you are doing, is sacred and holy, and should be offered as a gift to our Savior.

*O peoples of God! Remember your God!  
Remember him in all places.  
Remember him at all times.  
Remember his grace and his love.  
Remember his comfort and his mercy.  
Remember his beauty and his wonder.  
Remember his instruction and his holiness.*

*He is here. He is with you every moment.  
Every moment is holy.  
Amen.*







Bethany Armendariz

*Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke! - DANIEL 3:27*

The year 2017 marked the beginning of a season of trials in my life, touching almost every area: family, physical, financial, ministry, and mental. While this season was stripping, refining, and remolding, it was in these sorrows the presence of God was met with full force, the Spirit of God walking with me, His presence unmistakable.

The week after Christmas we welcomed a new little boy into our family, adding a little diversity to our fam-

ily of four girls. We were all thrilled, washing new blue clothes, setting up the Moses basket, and decorating a little added room with all the things. Knox Ezequiel was born December 27, 2017 in the quiet week between Christmas and New Year's, that happens to be my favorite week of the year. I had a wonderful delivery, my best friend was my nurse, my parents had the girls... all was well.

About three weeks after Knox was born, we were attempting to get

back into the swing of life and one afternoon as I was getting Paige, our 3-year old, out of the car, I twisted my back. Lifting a toddler after having a new baby is not recommended with loose abdominal muscles, as I soon realized. I was stranded in bed for over a week, nursing, doing a very loose version of school, and holding my new babe.

As my back loosened, we began to attend nature day again, our co-op, church, went on field trips to the Natural History Museum, and life quickly resumed, full of joy and noise. I met with a friend in life group who lost her son the winter before at 6 months and she held Knox while we talked and cried. We drank coffee and talked about how Daniel was so missed and yet spared so many hardships of the world.

March came in like a lion, and Thursday happened to be our busiest, fullest, most joyful and fun day. While Zeke was getting dressed that morning, he asked what I was teaching on at our Women's Ministry event for Easter. "How Jesus grieves differently with each of us. Martha aptly named Christ the Resurrection, while Jesus sat with Mary and wept. He is with us and He knows us."

We met friends for nature day, but the venue was changed to the park in our backyard in Long Beach. I was almost an hour late, but we got there and joined the other mamas, kids whacking bugs out of trees with sticks with normal childish exuberance. I nursed Knox while sitting on a log, talking about school and the normal disrupted chatter of women.

After stopping by church and my parents, we headed home because Zeke had let me know he was off early from work. Heading up Beach Blvd,

Sing by Pentatonix blasted, windows down, sunroof open, a glorious SoCal day. We got home and I went to bed to nurse Knox, exhausted from a full day, my body reminding me that I had delivered a baby about ten weeks ago, while 10-15 kids from our neighborhood running through the house to the trampoline, bouncing, laughing, yelling. After a short rest, Zeke was making dinner and Knox was asleep, so I laid him down and went for a quick WOG (a jog where you actually walk and look supremely awkward). It was my first time out post-partum and it felt so good. Music was blasting and the song came on, The Sound of the Saints. "Oh, Lord, I prayed, let the walls of our block fall down. May they know you as the One True God. Let Your word and will be known in Long Beach." I saw the walls of Jericho in my mind's eye, falling down as the truth of the Gospel was proclaimed, God's word going forth to every tribe, tongue and nation amongst neighbors we knew and loved.

Dinner was ready when I returned home and Zeke and the girls quickly ate before heading off to group violin lessons. I put Paige to bed and then had a brief thought as I headed to the living room, "I'd better get Knox to nurse or he's going to wake up while I'm mid-show and then I'm going to be annoyed." The sun was setting and as I went to get him, he was limp. I knew something was wrong, picked him up and began CPR. He was not responsive. I flew, holding him, to the front and began yelling for my neighbor who is an ER nurse practitioner to help. Another neighbor pulled into her driveway and she called 911. As Michelle began CPR, I ran to the house to find my phone, calling Zeke to tell him to come home. Knox was in the presence of our Lord.



Lights and sirens. The paramedics running over, box in hand and quickly assessing what was going on. I was told to sit up front but sat in the back with Knox while they urgently tried to revive his little body. I called my parents to meet us at Long Beach Memorial. We flew over familiar streets, twisting and turning as another package of medical equipment was opened. Another step in the algorithm followed. I sang aloud the only song that come to mind... "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye Heavenly Hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Broken, cracked, and tangled these words flowed, empowered by the Spirit, following many years of truth, to show themselves in the fire.

In the ER, I was the one flying down the hall after the stretcher. I was the one that the loudspeaker was calling a code for. I was the one that was receiving care for a heart born of my own. I was the one left in sorrow, knowing that my son was gone.

Zeke arrived and we held Knox after all efforts had failed. We said goodbye and then were called to a room for questioning by the sheriff and a medical investigator. Nearing midnight, we walked sobbing down the sterile hallway to see our parents. The ER was packed, over 100 people in a room meant for 55. We headed home, an empty car seat in the back.

We collected our girls from our neighbor's and brought them home to tell them that Knox was with Jesus. We played the Sound of the Saints, pray-

ing together that the Lord would use this to bring Christ to our neighborhood. We laid on the floor and cried, my mom hugging me and saying she prayed that we would never know a grief this great.

Joshua Tree National Park offered a wilderness of escape the next day, of togetherness, of repeating the promises of God and the hardness of our fallen world. My dad called that evening and offered to host a breakfast at our house for our neighbors and our life group to stop by, a place to mourn together: what a blessing! So many tears, so many memories, kids swinging out front on the tire swing, a cherry blossom tree being planted in our yard from our life group. On Sunday we sang about the breath of life, and tears flowed.

If you can't cry in church, then there is no proper place; It is no longer a Sanctuary.

So many mercies followed. Instead of teaching the women at church, I shared my study with about 500 people at Knox's service. The Gospel went out to friends, neighbors, and co-workers in ways we had only ever imagined. I grew in my ability to accept help. I matured in my ability to do life imperfectly and instead just show up and be. I was able to take time for grieving and not just continue on. I was refined in my ability to offer mercy and grace, able to listen and pray instead of talking. My journal is full of providences of His presence: a friend from church was the 911 dispatch, a friend who mentored me 10 years before had also lost





a child to SIDs, comfort given by the people of God, salvation shared with dear ones who are lost. One of the greatest of God's goodnesses to me was His providence in my sanctification of not heeding lies of wavering in my faith. If I had no faith, I had no hope, and God Himself lost His only Son. He knew. He knows.

How vivid this was as we scattered Knox's ashes in the Pacific the night before Resurrection morning. How poignant the message that Jesus' body was wrapped in a white shroud, as they had wrapped his little body in the hospital. To survive these dark days, we played music often and loudly. We turned on YouTube and watched or listened to the Gospels day or night when fear would creep into our home and my soul. I wakened my girls to watch movies with me and hold them close, be it 2 am or 330pm. Our dysregulation regulating my soul. As I cried out to see the hand of God, in the midst of dryness and my seeming inability to respond, I tucked away in journals images of His goodness. He provided a multitude of blessings pointing to Himself, His presence, and His beautiful and timely providence.

As the fires increased, seven times hotter than ever before, I will testify and say with saints that have gone before, I have not been scorched, nor smell of smoke, but some of the ropes which bind have been burned away, by His good will. May we sing together of His great love, in this fallen world as we shine to our world of His deep salvation and freedom.

## **"SOUND OF THE SAINTS"**

*Oh I love to hear the song of creation  
The wind and the rhythm of the rain  
Oh the thunder it speaks of your power  
But there's something in the sound of  
the saints*

*I've been washed in the roar of the ocean  
Found peace in the echoes of a cave  
And the trees of the field they clap  
their hands  
But there's something in the sound of  
the saints*

*From the lips of those you saved  
A redemption song will rise  
With a sound so full it cracks the sky  
Whoa oh ooh we sing allelujah  
Whoa oh ooh we sing amen  
Hear the sound of the saints as we march  
on to Zion singing  
Allelujah amen  
Singing allelujah amen*

*I will hear the chorus of the angels  
A forever symphony of praise  
I long to hear the voice of my Savior  
And He hears us the sound of the saints*

*From the lips of those You saved  
A redemption song will rise  
Every tongue every tribe hear the church  
Your bride*

*Whoa oh ooh we sing allelujah  
Whoa oh ooh we sing amen  
Hear the sound of the saints as we march  
on to Zion singing  
Allelujah amen  
Singing allelujah amen*

*Our hearts will rise our songs shall be  
Jesus Christ our Savior King forever  
Our hearts will rise the saints will sing  
Of Jesus Christ our Savior King forever  
forever*



Gather. Share. Encourage.

# AROUND *the* TABLE



**MAY 6 | 9:30am**

Bringing the women of Immanuel together for small in-home gatherings.

*Find out more and register at: [ibc.church/table](https://ibc.church/table)*





WOMEN'S MINISTRY

## *Mission Statement:*

Encouraging all women to be  
faithful followers of Christ who:

**READ • LOVE • OBEY & PROCLAIM**

## **God's Word**



**IMMANUEL BIBLE CHURCH**

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