

COLORADO *MISSIONS OFFERING*

IN HONOR OF NICY MURPHY

WE ARE

SENT

JESUS SAID TO THEM AGAIN,
"PEACE TO YOU!
AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME,
I ALSO SEND YOU."

—JOHN 20:21



**COLORADO
BAPTISTS**

coloradobaptists.org/cmo

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Colorado Baptists are sent by God to people who need Jesus. We are sharing Jesus with internationals, military spouses, children, and neighbors through targeted ministries. These ministries are supported through the Colorado Missions Offering in Honor of Nicy Murphy. Miss Nicy once said, “My prayer is that future generations will never lose their excitement and enthusiasm for seeing lives changed, new churches started, and older churches reaching out to plant new ones.”

DAY 1 DETERMINED BEGINNINGS

Colorado Baptists are tenacious people. Baptist life here started years before the founding of the Colorado Baptist General Convention in 1956. Southern Baptists who moved west after World War II sought churches who believed the same as they. Finding none, they started their own. These churches found support and community with other Southern Baptists in the Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah conventions.

In Grand Junction, people going door-to-door to take a “religious census” were met with a gun pointed at them. In Durango, the Southern Baptist pastor was excluded from participating in the ministerial association. In Colorado Springs, four young ministers conducted a census for First Southern Baptist Church. The quartet was “apprehended by a policeman, was taken to the police station and told they absolutely could not take such a census.”

Even after 1956, challenges to church planting continued in the five-and-a-half-state convention of 90 churches. Nicy Murphy helped equip local churches to meet those challenges.

Just as in the early days, challenges to church planting abound. Colorado Baptists remain tenacious and sent by Jesus to those around us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to challenge Colorado Baptists to live as those sent by Jesus.

DAY 2 CHURCH PLANTING

Shadrack and Elizabeth Ruto immigrated to the United States so Shadrack could attend Bible college. While serving in Dallas, Texas, the Rutos took a sabbatical in Colorado Springs. Two years in a row, they talked to people asking them to begin a church for Kenyans and other Africans. The third year, 2022, the Rutos avoided those people; others had the same question. The couple asked God, “Is this people or is this You?”

God orchestrated a series of events to firmly convince the Rutos He wanted them to plant a church in Colorado Springs. Upendo Baptist Church began meeting in October 2022 and reaches immigrants from Kenya, Uganda, and Congo, as well as African Americans.

Upendo adopted a member’s food outreach a Kenyan elementary school. Now a church has begun there.

“I want to thank Colorado Baptists for being proactive in reaching out to the immigrants in the community because the world has come here. The world is not only out there. The world in is our neighborhood,” Shadrack said. He expressed gratitude for Colorado Send Network’s ongoing church planting support.

Pray for Upendo Baptist Church to continue reaching Africans in Colorado Springs and in Kenya.

DAY 3

ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS

Community is important to Storied Church, Colorado Springs. Pastor Tim Hawkins, co-vocational pastor, was drawn to the needs of people in north Colorado Springs. Just as the church plant began, COVID-19 forced them to go fully online. When restrictions loosened, the Hawkins started hosting gatherings of 40-60 people in their home. The church longed to live life together and share that life with others.

The missional mindset at Storied Church led them to help communities in which church members live and work. Each summer, volunteers host block parties to build relationships in their neighborhoods. The first year they hosted five block parties—one in an apartment complex and others at private homes. The guiding question has been How do we help our communities and our people to be in relationship again?

Block parties are building trust in the community and opening Gospel doors. It's a joy, Hawkins said. This year four Storied Church families hosted block parties. A grant from the Colorado Missions Offering helped fund the events. Missions teams provided manpower and allowed the hosts to "be present relationally."

Pray for block parties to result in on-going relationships that lead to Jesus, salvation, and discipleship.

DAY 4

DISASTER RELIEF

When Tory Keller took Disaster Relief training in fall 2019, she didn't anticipate her first deployment would be serving food to people locked down by COVID-19 restrictions. "They were unable to purchase food because they were not able to go to their jobs. [Serving] was pretty awesome. I loved that our director and blue hat were able to see a way through all the restrictions and enable us to still be helpful and well-utilized in the community."

Keller's first experience hooked her. She helped with graffiti cleanup after the Denver riots, served after Hurricane Laura in Louisiana, helped during the fires in Colorado and Hawaii, and did flood recovery in Missouri. Most recently, she deployed with teams doing flood work

in Wray, Yuma, and Greeley. These small towns are not on everyone's radar. "It's just been beautiful [to serve there] because we are reaching people, touching people who generally would go unnoticed," Keller said.

DR volunteers exhibit and speak Jesus' love to people who are hurting. "God meets us through Disaster Relief... It is about ministry. It is about sharing the Gospel," she said.

Ask God to call compassionate volunteers who are willing to learn needed skills.

DAY 5

COLORADO MISSIONS

The Avenue Church and La Iglesia Avenida, Aurora, are two expressions of the same church. English as a Second Language ministry, said director Steve Salmon, is a "very crucial part of what we believe is God's plan to integrate the two cultures together."

The ministry, which began in February, originally targeted Spanish speakers of La Iglesia Avenida. It has given opportunity for the ESL teachers, 90% of whom are from the English-speaking side of the church, to "cross those lines of culture ... We now have teachers who know the lives of these students. They know their names. They know their families. They pray for them," Salmon said.

The ESL Basic Workshop equipped volunteers to share Jesus through teaching English. "ESL is the best connections with our community. Forty percent of the homes speak another language, at least... People are always looking for ways to reach people for Christ. Here is one," said Salmon.

Volunteer Marcy Stoddard said, "There are ways to serve, and you must pray first." She believes ESL will lead to citizenship classes and is building a relationship with a potential citizenship student.

Pray for churches to begin ESL ministries to share Jesus with internationals.

DAY 6

DISASTER RELIEF

Peaks Kids Camp at Ponderosa gave more than 400 campers, in two half-week sessions, opportunity to experience the outdoors.

More importantly, children were able to experience worship in ways that made sense to them. "We got to use all our voice [in worship] instead of being more quiet about it," said camper Daniel Cooper. "We can do that at church, but we don't really feel like it because it's not as big a place. Not everybody is the same age," he said.

Parker Wyrick enjoyed Peaks Kids Camp, too. The way camp pastor Tree Cooper presented the sermons impressed Parker. Cooper assigned campers parts of the Bible story to act out. Parker said, "There wasn't practicing. He would say what they would do. It was really fun because everyone got to have a part and do one of their favorite Bible stories."

"I like ring-the-bell," Daniel said. "People who got saved at kids camp would come up and ring the bell to show they got saved. We all got to be happy for that person." This year, 44 children made salvation decisions.

Pray for Ponderosa to be a place for Colorado Baptists to grow closer to Jesus.

DAY 7

GATEWAY SEMINARY

Beth Runkle didn't expect to earn a seminary degree. Her position with Cru Military required her to take theological training, but the pandemic shut down the ministry's training schools. "I started [seminary] with the intent to take one or two courses to enable me to use my brain and be involved in something that would benefit my ministry," she said.

The graduate's seminary experience enhanced her Cru Military ministry. It also deepened her research and writing skills. Runkle's first book *Another Move, God?: 30 Encouragements to Embrace Your Life as a Military Wife* is available for pre-order. It explores the parallels between Old Testament Sarah and military life, of which she has first-hand experience.

"[Gateway's professors] took me seriously as a woman. They encouraged me as a woman. But my favorite thing about Gateway's professors is that they're not talking the talk; they are walking the walk."

"God calls us to love him with our heart, with our soul, and with our mind. So, that's what seminary was for me: it was using the mind that God has given me for his glory," she said.

Pray God will bring students to Gateway who will glorify Him.

DAY 8

ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS AND PASTORAL CARE AND TRAINING

Small towns of 500-5,000 dot Colorado's Western Slope. Churches here have two options for hiring pastors, said Brandon Mathis, pastor of Celebration Church, Montrose, and co-director of the Pastoral Institute of the Western Slope. "They can hire somebody local who will stay for a long time, but they don't really have the training that they need to do the job well, or they can go hire somebody not from the western side of Colorado who on average stick around a year and a half to two and a half years."

On the Western Slope, one-third of our churches do not have a pastor. The Uncompahgre Baptist Association started the Pastoral Institute to address that need. The institute offers a two-year curriculum to equip future pastors, church planters, and other leaders.

"The Pastoral Institute is a recognition that if we are going to reach the Western Slope for the Lord, we have to raise up leaders. It's the laborers who are few. If we have the laborers for the Harvest, the Harvest gets done," Mathis said.

Ask God for harvest workers on Colorado's Western Slope who hunger for training to serve well.