

COLORADO MISSIONS OFFERING

IN HONOR OF NICY MURPHY

RESTORING HOPE

BUT IN YOUR HEARTS REGARD CHRIST THE LORD
AS HOLY, READY AT ANY TIME TO GIVE A DEFENSE
TO ANYONE WHO ASKS YOU FOR A REASON
FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU

1 PETER 3:15



**COLORADO
BAPTISTS**

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Prayer Guide

OFFERING SUPPORTS: Associational Missions • State Missions • Disaster Relief • Resort & Leisure Ministries • Ponderosa Camp • Seminary Students • more

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BUT IN YOUR HEARTS REGARD CHRIST THE LORD AS HOLY, READY AT ANY TIME TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO ANYONE WHO ASKS YOU FOR A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU **1 PETER 3:15**

Hope. Psychology affirms people need hope. Psychologists define hope as a sense of optimism—believing one will experience better times and will be able to weather bad circumstances. But this optimism is not truth, nor is it permanent. Non-believers who encounter believers walking in truth and faith are drawn to an eternal hope.

The charge to believers is to be ready to share the reason for the hope we have—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Colorado Baptists, in every area of our state, share the hope of the gospel with people who are desperate for it. During this time of prayer for Colorado State Missions, pray for believers to be equipped to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Use the stories and prompts to guide your prayers. Ask God where He wants you to give the reason for the hope in you. Give, so together Colorado Baptists can help each other share the reason for the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

DAY 1 INVESTMENT OF OTHERS

The Colorado Baptist General Convention, at its inception in 1956, was part of a five-and-a-half state convention of Southern Baptist churches. In 1967, Western Nebraska joined the Kansas-Nebraska Convention. Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas formed the Northern Plains Convention in January 1968, making Colorado a single-state convention. However, Colorado has never been without the assistance of other states. Author Bonnie Ball O'Brien wrote, "The outpouring of love, assistance and on-the-spot help from other states to [Colorado Baptists] is almost unparalleled in Southern Baptist life."

In 1981, Bob Lawrence, an early CBGC leader, credited student summer missionaries who conducted VBS with 90% of Colorado's initial churches. Don Murray, the CBGC Director of Missions in 1981, reported that an estimated 6,000 missions volunteers traveled to Colorado in 1980. Murray saw the example of these volunteers leading Colorado Baptists to do the same in other places.

Colorado Baptists continue to benefit from short-term mission volunteers and church planters who serve Jesus in our state. Summer missionaries. Youth and adult teams. Disaster Relief volunteers. Church planters. Colorado Baptists say, "Thank you for investing in us!"

Thank God for each missions volunteer and church planter serving in Colorado this year.

DAY 2 CHURCH PLANTING

Tanner and Lacey Stevenson didn't move to Gypsum in 2020 to begin a church. The couple needed to take a breather from ministry, and they thought a time in business would give them distance to see what God had for them next. "I think God just used our naivety of how gospel-less the Vail Valley is to get us here," he said. "I'm not sure we would have moved out here if we'd have known that."

God knit the Stevensons' hearts to the Valley community. Gospel-sharing opportunities came out of natural conversations "in the middle of tentmaking, and God just slowly opened our hearts to what might be here in the valley and how we might be able to use this small business to keep food on the table and provide for ourselves while trying to plant the church from the ground up."

The plant's core team shows up in the community, building relationships and sharing Jesus naturally, the same way Tanner built the core team. An official launch of Ski Town Church is planned for next spring.

Pray God will cause the Stevensons to walk in joyful obedience as they equip their core team.

DAY 3

COLORADO VOLUNTEER CHURCH BUILDERS

Colorado Volunteer Church Builders (CVCB) teams spent three weeks in Howard, Colorado, working on a closed church building. After \$50,000 - \$60,000 in materials and probably "\$250,000 worth of work over those three weeks... A church that had been closed seven years, we were able to fix it up and get a church planter in there," said Brad Cowger, CVCB's leader.

Howard is just one example of CVCB fulfilling its mission: matching skilled laborers in local churches with other churches in need of skilled labor. Norwood is another place a CVCB team made a difference. It took a week to make necessary repairs on the church parsonage. The church now has a pastor, and attendance has grown from fewer than a dozen to more than 40.

Volunteers use their giftedness, whether drywall or plumbing, to meet needs of other local churches. "The community sees [the activity going on in the church], and they even stop and ask, 'What is going on?' It brings excitement to the community; it is a way to bring attention to the church, and eventually brings attention to Christ," Cowger said.

Ask God to send laborers to serve other churches.

DAY 4

DISASTER RELIEF

Fire. Flood. Tornado. Hurricane. Each disaster reveals the desperate need people have for the hope of Jesus Christ. Colorado Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers bring hope and healing as they provide practical help. Dennis Belz, CBDR director, said, "We get to see the destruction of their homes or whatever the disaster was; you get to see the people's reactions when our team shows up. We first meet them at the Disaster Assistance Center ...they find out what it is we can do to help them. And you [can] just see the difference on their face and their countenance. They're starting to feel hope—there's somebody there who's going to help them through this stage of their life."

Disaster Relief volunteers are equipped to meet both the physical needs and spiritual needs of victims. At each disaster recovery site, volunteers meet with the family,

pray with them, and leave a physical Bible signed by the team to encourage spiritual growth and reliance on God. Sharing Jesus, the reason for unwavering hope, comes naturally in the relationships formed between volunteers and victims.

Ask God to provide abundantly for the financial needs of this ministry through CMO and direct gifts.

DAY 5

COLORADO MISSIONS

Seven years of hosting sports camp for elementary-age children has taught Paul Floyd, pastor of High Plains Fellowship, Lamar, that "It takes a lot of investment to get people to trust us. We are here to serve them." In addition to sports, children hear Bible stories and make related crafts.

Morrison Heights Baptist Church, Clinton, Mississippi, sends a team yearly to work alongside High Plains members. Susan Wilson has made the trip multiple times. "The first year, I had all kinds of things planned. Then I realized many children here don't know what a Bible is. They are hearing each story for the first time." She's noticed home lives are not always positive. "We use scripture to help them understand our only hope is in God."

Hosting sports camp year after year brings something consistent to the community. It builds trust in a town not inclined to trust churches. "They're looking for a reason not to come," Floyd said. High Plains seeks to show Jesus so clearly, they will become believers and desire to be part of a faith community.

Pray the Gospel will take root in families whose children attend sports camps across Colorado.

DAY 6

PONDEROSA

Jimmy Peck, Vista Grande Baptist Church, Colorado Springs children's minister, said, "[Ponderosa] always made us feel like we're working together to reach kids and using the resources through Ponderosa that God has provided. And our church has always been blessed." Peck relies on Ponderosa to provide excellent programming during summer children's camps, but he has experienced more than that. Ponderosa is available to local churches who want to create their own programming. Vista Grande

does that with their annual children's winter retreat. "I think sometimes when you're in a setting outside of your traditional church building, some kids are a little bit more open and feel a little bit more relaxed." Their retreat is an opportunity for children to go deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ and each other.

"Sometimes we're not aware or sensitive to what kids are going through," Peck said. They are deeply affected by divorce, loneliness, and academics. Children attending a spiritual retreat often deepen friendships with other children in the church, and those relationships can strengthen young faith. Those faith friendships continue long after the retreat ends.

Pray for Ponderosa as the camp seeks to meet the local church's retreat needs.

DAY 7 GATEWAY SEMINARY

The Northern Colorado Teaching Site of Gateway Seminary's Rocky Mountain Campus began classes in August. Dr. Josh Hutchens, the site's professor, said, "Our hope and vision is simply to prepare in the mountain west ministers for the mountain west." The Rocky Mountain Campus opened in 1996 to provide quality seminary education within the mountain west's cultural context. Technology and other changes in education allow seminary to be offered everywhere, but local access to seminary means, "They're staying in our church, serving in our church with their giftings while investing in those gifts and developing those gifts to the full potential, hopefully, that they can," Hutchens said.

He believes seminary helps church leaders articulate hope described in 1 Peter 3:15. "I love that Peter talks about us having a reason for the hope that is in us. So, the idea is that our hope is reasonable. It's not just

something, something emotional or something, you know, just kind of like Pollyanna...It's a hope based on a reason...if you go back to 1 Peter, chapter 1, the resurrected Christ is the reason."

Pray for professors at RMC' main campus and teaching sites as they prepare students for ministry.

DAY 8 ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS

Colorado's suicide rate exceeds the national by 9 percentage points, and El Paso's teen suicide rate is 5 above the national average. Those numbers propelled Paden Rogers and Roberto Sanchez, student pastors at Cross Fellowship Black Forest and Palmer Park campuses, to action.

Cross Fellowship, Vista Grande Baptist, Pikes Peak Association, and other Colorado Springs churches hosted a pre-Easter gathering for youth of the city. "Our hope was that not only would God save teenagers, He would affect the whole family," said Rogers. "We believed that teenagers, when they respond to this hope of Jesus, man, they do wild things with it."

More than 1,400 students representing 76 churches and 34 schools attended. They heard the reason for the hope believers have—the Gospel. Rogers said 73 youth went to left field to begin their relationship with Jesus while 270+ went to right field and learned to disciple new believers.

Among the new believers are 27 students from Agate who traveled 90 minutes to attend. Rogers later conducted a discipleship camp in their ranching community. "They want to continue to respond to who Jesus called them to be."

Pray for Colorado youth to experience Jesus' hope.

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