TouchPoint

The North American Baptist Conference Women's Connection Newsletter

FALL 2026



My life as a Church planter's wife

CO-LABORERS IN ANTELOPE, CALIFORNIA

BY SARAH CASSIDY

My name is Sarah Cassidy and John (my husband) and I planted Hope Community church in Antelope, a suburb of Sacramento, in 2019. We have two amazing teens at home who love God and we all continue to work out what it means to be a follower of Jesus in community. I have worked in elementary education for most of my adult life and currently work as a substitute teacher so I can have a more flexible schedule to allow for Kingdom work. We were planted, in part, by a large church we had been serving for almost 18 years in various positions. Starting Hope was a labor of love and a lesson in faith as we worked through what it means to start a new church family without severing the relationships with the old one.

When did you realize that church planting was something God was calling your family (you and John) toward—what were your hopes and expectations going into the adventure?

John went on a short-term mission trip to Brazil in 2003. He kept a prayer journal on that trip, and wrote for the first time, "I believe God is calling me to plant a church. "The next year while driving through the Antelope area, he got out of the car to pray because he felt that God was calling him to plant a church in the area. New housing and condominium signs were posted in open fields and it was clear this was a developing area in need of the Savior. When he shared this with me, I was convinced that the call was real, but was unsure of the timing. We both felt we needed much more ministry experience and growth before we could take on the task. So we kept investing in the church we had been in and God continued to invest in us through His people, education and experiences. In 2017, this call became more clear and God began putting pieces into place for us to move forward. He brought the dream to fruition with a small team of volunteers beginning regular services at the local high school in 2019.

What has been one of the greatest joys of walking through this with John?

One of the greatest joys I have experienced is worship band, Hope Kids Team, AV Team and Set Up/Tear Down. We have always taught them that they are a part of the Body of Christ and called to serve and enjoy the community God has brought them into at church. It hasn't always been easy to serve week in and week out, but I'm so proud of the way they diligently serve God through serving at Hope. I have also had the privilege of watching many youth and kids grow in their relationship with God through their involvement with Hope! There is nothing sweeter than watching someone show their commitment to following God through baptism and getting to be a part of their discipleship moving forward.

Church planting has renewed in me a love for the Bible and a joy for teaching the stories, themes, and nuggets of truth

What have you learned about yourself through this experience—what areas of church planting bring energy and life and encouragement?

Church planting has renewed in me a love for the Bible and a joy for teaching the stories, themes, and nuggets of truth I find there to anyone who will listen! I love when I hear my Hope Kids toddlers class engage with Bible stories or when the light bulb goes on and a new believer unearths a deep Biblical truth. I enjoy teaching and learning Scripture through conversations and

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NORTH AMERICAN BAPTISTS
women's connection

Purpose Statement

Women's Connection exists to connect women of the North American Baptist Conference, encouraging them in their desire to serve God. Our team is committed to providing resources to help women deepen their faith and equip them for ministry wherever God places them.

Our Core Values

CALLING AND WORTH

We value the essential role women play in ministry.

QUALITY RESOURCES

We value God's Word and seek resources that are Biblically sound, applicable and accessible.

BROADER CONNECTION

We value supporting the broader vision of the North American Baptist Conference and developing a connection among North American Baptist Conference women.

LEGACY AND THE FUTURE

We value the legacy of women who have gone before us and are committed to engaging the next generation.

Church planter's wife...from page 1

questions that challenge, hone, and broaden our understanding of God's Word. I think the Word was meant to be experienced and explored in community and I have a deep love for creating and facilitating spaces where that can happen.

What helps you recharge when ministry becomes overwhelming?

We try to schedule time away as a family at least three times a year. It is usually a quick trip to the beach, visiting friends, or camping in the mountains; but it's just far enough that we have to leave work and ministry behind and take a real Sabbath. As an introvert, I enjoy spending time alone listening to audio books, gardening (my best prayer times), cleaning while belting out worship tunes, or walking my neighborhood. I also lean on four good friends outside of my church that have become my sounding board for life and ministry. They are my prayer warriors, my practical wisdom well and my reality check when I'm overwhelmed or anxious.

How has your relationship with God changed through church planting? Is there a Bible verse or passage that has helped carry you through this journey?

This is a hard one to answer because church planting didn't happen in a vacuum and God has used MANY life changes and circumstances to challenge, change, and grow me. He has shown me his faithfulness through growth and joy, loss and betrayal, faithful friends and new friends, and even through my relationships with my unbelieving neighbors and friends. I am still learning trust and obedience; still learning to lay down my pride and self-assurance and lean into his power and presence. However, something specifically related to church planting that God has developed in me is a more compassionate heart for the lost. I'm deeply convicted that the reason he has placed me here to share the blessing of knowing Him with those around me. I'm reminded daily that there is still a whole world of people who do not know the love, purpose, and peace that I find in Jesus. I am struck by the truth that I might be the only emissary of Jesus that my neighborhood friends interact with and the weight of this motivates me to take advantage of the opportunities that My Father presents. It also motivates me to gather with other believers and encourage them to have compassion on the lost. Think of the impact we can have together if we live on mission with God and earnestly work at the ministry of reconciliation. Imagine how the world (workplaces, churches, generations of families, friendships, neighborhoods, cities) would change if reconciliation was our goal. When I think about our mission, I think about the powerful simplicity of the Gospel. That God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and now he is entrusting us with the ministry and message of reconciliation to others.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

If you could sit down with yourself on the day you first started this journey, what would you want that younger version of you to know?

When you first plant a church, you tend to feel about the church the way one might feel about their sweet, newborn baby. You want to share it with everyone; invite others to behold the beauty of something new. It becomes something very personal when you take personal risks and make sacrifices to "birth" a new church. With that being said, it's a bit jarring when other believers don't share in your excitement or appreciate your passion. It feels a bit like someone calling your baby ugly! When we first planted, a wise soul commented that we would be surprised who God would bring to help and support us and even more surprised who in our lives would not be moved to help. He said that either way, don't take any of it personally. Who and how God calls is totally up to Him and we have to trust that He has a bigger plan than us. God moves people around in the worldwide Church to serve His plan and we don't ultimately choose who gets onboard or how and when they do. We are called to faithfully serve in whatever seasons He arranges and with whomever He sends. When people come and when people go in church life, it usually has much more to do with God working and drawing than with any specific reaction someone has to me. I have had to remind myself of this on many occasions (and there were many more when I failed to remember). It is something I would lock in on for the younger me and anyone else entering a season of stepping out in faith.



TOUCHPOINT SERIES:

The Women of Kairos
TANYA GERICKE

BY LYNDELL CAMPBELL REQUIA

It was a pleasure to interview my former missionary colleague, Tanya Gericke, about her various connections to Kairos University over the years. She first heard about Kairos University at an NAB Triennial she attended where she met the president, Greg Hensen. It made a lot of sense. At the time, Tanya was living on the mission field, desiring to further her studies, and Kairos offered her a way to study in the context where she was serving. She started out as a student doing her master's in Christian leadership. After completing her master's degree, she became a faculty mentor. However, it was her research on Generation Z during her Doctorate in Ministry degree and the deeper conversations she was having with her own mentors and Kairos staff that led to her current role as an associate professor, as well as Director of Undergraduate Formation for Kairos University upon returning to Canada. It has been the opportunity to put her research into practice on being more intentional in discipling and training the next generation of pastors and missionaries. (For more information on Tanya's research, check out her article here: The Balloon - Toward Formational Theologizing with Gen Z)

Kairos is experiencing an increase in the traditional bachelor age student, 18–25-year-olds, that like the approach of competency-based education. For the most part, these students have done a gap year program, like YWAM, and they want to continue in their journey. So, Tanya's role is to come alongside these students to develop curriculum and cohorts that will help them continue their spiritual and educational journey.

When I asked Tanya what a significant learning experience during her own journey with Kairos has been, this is what she shared: "On the mission field, it was quite lonely and what the Kairos model forced me to do was create a mentor team and have community. That intentionality of having a personal mentor, a faculty mentor and a vocational mentor who is someone who's been on the mission field was just so important for me. It provided me with accountability, wisdom and longevity on the field. And that was huge. And because it was such a life-giving, rich experience, I've maintained mentoring relationships in my life. I also realized as women, we just need more community. So, I've connected with several young women from all over the world who are my age and we started to meet monthly on Zoom. We share our stories and burdens and pray with one another."

Lastly, I asked Tanya what the highlights and challenges are of being a woman in theological education. A highlight that has come from Tanya's experience with the global church is when the body of Christ has diversity in leadership where women minister to other women as well as men. Women bring a different understanding of discipleship and of how the Lord works through the gifts they exercise. The result is a beautiful edification where the Spirit works through different cultures, individuals and genders. This interdependent diversity is necessary and exists within the framework of how the Kingdom and the church is supposed to operate.

Tanya goes on to share, "Now, as there are more and more opportunities for women to serve in ministry, it's important that we step into those roles and that we disciple the next generation. A challenge for me when I first stepped into ministry was finding an older woman to mentor me. I found many wonderful men to mentor me and gleaned a lot of wisdom from them, but I wish I had more women in my life at that time. I think that is why this is a huge passion of mine: how do I raise up this next generation, especially in some of the positions that I've held more directed towards leadership. I want women to know there is a space for them to serve. The question I ask myself is, how do I raise up women to see that there are avenues to follow their calling?

Then, there is the more historical challenge where women have had limitations for where they can serve. Even for myself, when I was discerning my calling, I felt led in the direction to be an educator because I would have more opportunities there to exercise my leadership gifts than in ministry.

At the end of the day, I want women to steward their gifts and calling by stepping into these leadership positions. It is unfortunate that these limitations can force us into believing that we can't simply based on the fact that we are women. This is the added layer of tension that we navigate."

As I reflect on my time with Tanya, I feel blessed when I think about the women who have poured into my life and ministry for many years. They not only passed on so much wisdom, but they also modeled the way much like Tanya is doing today.

North American Baptist Triennial

One Hope

July 15-17, 2027

Heartland Community Church Medina, Ohio

A Legacy of Hands and Heart: Honoring Canadian NAB Women

Every October, Canadians pause to celebrate **Women's History Month,** an opportunity to honor the trailblazers who built our communities, challenged institutional barriers and shaped our shared identity. Within the heritage of the North American Baptist Conference women have long been the quiet supporters of conference growth, deep theological faithfulness and global missional expansion. While early NAB leadership rosters often overlooked their names, their vision, hands-on labor and spiritual devotion provided the foundation upon which our modern conference stands today.

The organized history of women in the NAB found its voice in 1907 with the formation of The General Sisters' Union of German Baptists of North America. Uniting 70 local ladies mission societies from the US and Canada, these trailblazing women recognized that they were stronger together. We celebrate these pioneer sisters who stitched communities together, sustained global medical missions and left a legacy of faith in action that continues to shape who we are as NAB. These women responded to the call. Stand firm in one spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel. Philippians 1:27

In 1922 Canadian NAB women joined the White Cross movement, to provide medical and compassion supplies to underdeveloped countries. For decades Canadian women have gathered to cut baby layettes, roll bandages and pack shipping crates to send these much-needed supplies to the Cameroon Baptist Convention. Thank you to those who still faithfully prepare medical supplies and Ai Hayashizaki the enthusiastic administrator of the White Cross Canada Centre.

We value the legacy of women who have gone before, who have served the women of the NAB faithfully…women like Manetta Hohn, Elizabeth Babbel, Maria Rogalski who inspired, challenged and helped prepare and support women for ministry.

We also are grateful for those women from Canada who made a huge difference on the mission fields. Thank you Trudy Schatz, Minnie Kuhn, Betty Mantay , Ardice Ziolkowski, Lori Hiller all nurse midwives who helped keep medical help going when there was a shortage of doctors in Cameroon. Thank you Tina Schmidt for your ministry in Cameroon. Thank you Ardath Effa, Jerilyn Bayer, Lyndell Campbell Requia who were/are the voice in Brazil through evangelism, educational and social justice issues. Thank you Yuri Nakano for acting on your love for the women of Japan and Maureen Moody as you graciously lead our work in Cameroon.

And thank you, Tanya Gericke, former missionary to Romania, for the bridge you are preparing as we look to the ways to encourage and support NextGen women. Tanya's challenge for the future, "Now, as there are more and more opportunities to serve in ministry, it's important that we step into those roles and that we disciple the next generation."

Remembering these women isn't only about looking backward – it is about honoring the women currently driving change, leading ministries and building a stronger future for the NAB faith community today in Canada.

US White Cross



White Cross USA Has moved their location in the For the City building in Bismarck, North Dakota. Visitors are welcome any time to see the busy ministry.



Work room for groups to share in the activities at the center complete with Cameroonian artifacts. As you enter the building.

White Cross

"We hosted an Open House for our host church Century Baptist in Bismarck. Teams from churches and community groups are coming once or twice a week—we are booked through November. Sanford Health Center has begun releasing medical items to the center. We are getting ready to ship the fourth container this year. God is good."

- Dan and Debbie Long

Meet our Women's Connection Team

APRIL WAHL
Bismarck
North Dakota



What a delight it is to serve with this team that is made up of 5 women from North Dakota, California, Alberta, Brazil and New York. We have laughed together and traveled to various corners of NAB land to share with the women of our conference that they are seen and loved by God and others . Our desire is to encourage NAB women in their walk with God and as a leader in their local settings

WHO ARE YOU?
I'm April Wahl. I'm a gal living in the middle of North Dakota. I'm married to Jordan and have two boys who love to go on adventures. I'm a gal who loves '90s and early 2000s music, chooses to visit Disney World any chance I get, and works for a great organization called Stuff You Can Use.

WHERE DO YOU SERVE?
I serve alongside a great team of people at Mission Church in Bismarck, North Dakota, leading the youth ministry.

WHAT GETS YOU EXCITED ABOUT WOMEN'S CONNECTION?
I love working with our team, creating spaces to empower the next generation of female leaders in the church, reminding them they are loved, they matter, and they belong.

Will you pray for April and her fervent desire to see young women flourish in their local settings and know that they are loved and equipped for life in their local settings. Pray that opportunities will appear for our team to support the next generation.

VP3 VantagePoint3 vantagepoint3.org | A Mentoring Way amentoringway.org

Cultivate a Mentoring Way in your relationships, leadership, team, and ministry context

If we hope to help men and women "grow up into Christ in every way" (Ephesians 4:15), creating an environment that cultivates and equips adults to walk alongside others well is essential.

Imagine a Mentoring Way in Your Context

Join **Rob Loane, Pam Edwards, and guest practitioner Holly Carlson** for a practical and encouraging conversation that will stretch your imagination for how mentoring can take shape in settings you care about and lead.

Most adults don't believe they have what it takes to mentor someone else. But mentoring can be learned, and this conversation will give you practical examples for equipping others as well as growing as a mentor yourself.

A mentoring way can be transferred and cultivated in all of our relationships, leadership, teams, churches, and workplaces.

Whether mentoring is new to you or already part of how you lead and relate to others, this workshop will help you grow in a mentoring way yourself and equip others to do the same.

Discover how presence, prayer, deep listening, and thoughtful questions can become part of the way you cultivate a mentoring environment in your setting.

Mentor's Workshop
Nov. 10, 2026
7:30–8:45 PM CT
Online

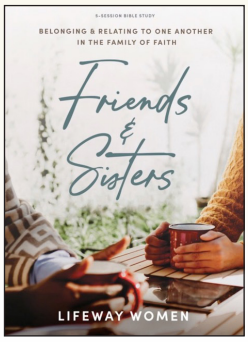
Reserve your spot and consider bringing your team or colleagues with you.

Tickets start at $20
Group ticket pricing:
5+ at $18/ticket or
10+ at $15/ticket

Register online:
www.amentoringway.org

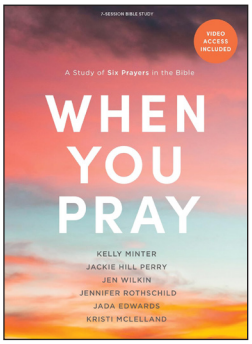
Fall/Christmas Studies & Books

Friends & Sisters



Bible Study Book: Belonging and Relating to One Another in the Family of Faith

God designed us for relationship. The Bible describes the people of God as a family, and Jesus often spoke of His followers as sisters and brothers. In Christ, you are part of a sisterhood that is bound together by faith, love, and a shared purpose. But what does it look like to be sisters in Christ in the midst of a loneliness epidemic, when genuine friendship is harder and harder to find?



When You Pray

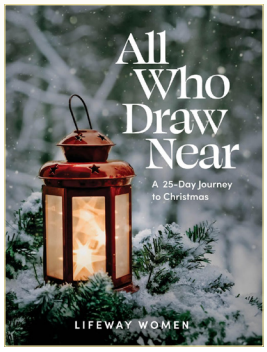
Bible Study for Women A Study of Six Prayers in the Bible

Do you have trouble thinking of words to say to God when you pray? Are you afraid some emotions are too intense to express to God? Do you reach the end of a day only to realize you haven't prayed at all? You're not alone. Prayer is the way we relate to God, but sometimes it's a struggle. Throughout God's Word, we encounter many voices who teach us how to pray.

In this 7-session study, join with six beloved Bible teachers who will help you study prayers in the Bible that can inspire your own. You'll learn that God welcomes your praise and lament, your thanksgiving and intercession. You'll see examples of how to pray when you're alone and when you're gathered with others. Above all, you'll notice there's no one right way to pray. As you draw near to God through prayer, you'll find your faith strengthened and your heart united to you draw near to God through prayer, you'll find your faith strengthened and your heart united to Christ.

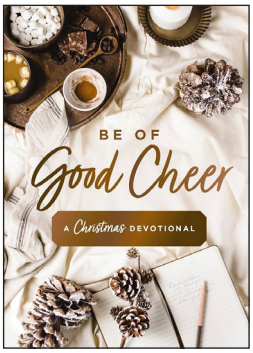
ADVENT – PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE BABY JESUS

All Who Draw Near



A 25-day Advent Bible study from Lifeway Women that follows the journeys of key figures in the Christmas story, including Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. The study features daily personal Bible study sessions and is designed to deepen reflection on the coming of Christ.

Written for adults, this study includes leader helps for four group sessions, a beautiful full-color interior, and additional activities and ideas to enhance Christmas celebrations and travel. The study aims to inspire readers to appreciate the significance of Christ's birth and to encourage a deeper commitment to following Jesus during Advent and beyond.



Be of Good Cheer

Find peace for your heart and joy for your spirit amid the holiday hustle.

Has being "merry and bright" and decking the halls left you feeling overwhelmed and exhausted? Set down your to-do list, grab a warm beverage, and cozy up with Be of Good Cheer for 40 days of Advent devotional reflections, Scripture readings, and prayers to bring you back to the beauty of the season.

Each entry in this 40-day devotional invites you to reflect on one word that embodies the true meaning of Christmas. A corresponding Bible verse, a cheerful prayer, and beautiful Christmas photos guide your spirit, memories, and longings back to the heart of Christmas.

CONNECT WITH US : North American Baptist Conference : 1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Roseville, CA 95678 : wm.nabc@gmail.com www.nabconference.org