

# NORTONVILLE NEWS

## Armed With Prayer

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18)**

On February 22nd, we began our 40 days of prayer plus, a time between now and Easter in which we are encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ to take time every day in specific prayer. When we look into God’s Word, we see many verses that emphasize the importance of prayer for every individual believer. One of those verses is found in an epistle written to the Ephesians by Paul, in which he exhorts the believers to be dedicated to prayer.

In the verses prior to verse 18, Paul describes how the Christian should put on the whole armor of God; the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, sandals of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Word of God. He describes all that the Christian needs to fight in spiritual warfare, all that is needed to survive the attack of Satan, and to have a successful Christian walk. Having donned all these and taken up the arms, Paul gives one more practical step necessary for every believer, their method of attack, and the way believers can rebuff the prevailing of the Devil. That being prayer!

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## Stay Connected

### Sunday

**9:30 am Sunday** School

**10:45 am Sunday** morning

**6:00 pm Sunday** night

**6:00 pm Sunday** Youth Group

### Tuesday

**Small Groups** at 6:30 pm  
in Spring Lake and  
Grand Haven

### Wednesday

**Prayer Meeting** at 6:30 pm

**Olympians** at 6:30 pm

The first way in which we are directed to pray is to be “in the Spirit.” When we are praying to God, we should not do so with a mind to puff up ourselves, or to further our own fleshly desires. When Christ told His disciples to pray, He instructed them to pray that “Your will be done”, not “Our will be done”! How often do we pray amiss, clouded by our desire to see matters resolved the way we see fit! Whatever we pray, it should be led by the Spirit, that it may be in accordance with the will of God.

We are also instructed to pray “with all perseverance”. The word implies a steadfastness and a regularity in one’s prayer. Prayer can happen spontaneously, and often the dearest and most heartfelt prayers come in times of sudden trouble. But our prayers should be more than just a one and done call to God when we need a pick me up! We need to regularly take time to be in prayer. Praying with perseverance means that we need to make prayer a real priority!

While praying in the Spirit, and with all perseverance, we are commanded to be in prayer for “all the saints.” Every believer has their own battle to fight, but all are fighting the same war, and against the same foe! We should be praying for one another, that we be strengthened against that foe, Satan. Paul, in the next verse, asks that the Ephesians be in prayer for him, that he may be bold in proclaiming the gospel. Just as the Ephesians were praying for Paul, we too should be praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ, that they may be strengthened and emboldened to make a stand for God.

If we are to, as Paul wrote, “stand against the wiles of the Devil”, we need prayer. No man can live a successful Christian life in His own power, it’s only through the intercession of God that we are able to prevail against the Devil! God wants us to be in prayer to Him, to call out in His name. He wants us to be praying in His will, and to persevere in that prayer. He wants us to be in prayer for our fellow saints, strengthening them to stand, and that they too will live in the will of God. Let us not forget the most formidable tool in the arsenal of the Believer, let us be in continual prayer to the Lord!

# Forty Plus Days of Prayer

February 22nd - April 9th

If you have internet and would like to watch our Sunday morning service, search for Nortonville Gospel Chapel on Facebook or YouTube. You can also see the video and discover more resources on our website [www.nortonvillechapel.info](http://www.nortonvillechapel.info).

No Internet? Simply call 616-846-7309 at 10:45 am on Sunday and you can listen to the whole morning service.

# Spotlight: Bridget Gazlay



You could say Bridget's challenges started the minute she was born. Bridget was born "Twin A" five weeks early and weighed three pounds, but she quickly went down to two pounds. Bridget and her twin sister were born with hyaline membrane disease, where your lungs aren't fully formed. They were immediately put into incubators. It was a trying time for her parents as they both almost died. Bridget made it home, finally, after five weeks and weighed five pounds.

Bridget's troubled start didn't hold her back though. She participated in sports, band, and church activities. Her mom always took them to church and Bridget accepted Jesus as her Savior around the age of six. Bridget's younger brother came along when she was six and a half and their family was complete. Bridget's dad was the band teacher and her mom was the volleyball coach, so participating in those activities wasn't a choice! Bridget learned so much from her parents in what it means to commit to something and to have a strong work ethic. She still has a love for music today, thanks to her father.

Bridget participated in many church activities, like choir, youth group, Sunday school, and Bible studies. Even though she did all those things, she still wasn't fully trusting God with her life. Bridget preferred to do things HER way. She had her own ideas, her own plans, her own agenda. She wanted to be a physical therapist, get married, have 2.3 kids, and have a big house with a white picket fence. She had it all planned out.

But, as we all know, things don't always go the way we think they will. As Bridget and her sister headed off to Northern Michigan University, she was ready to tackle the world. Oh, what a dark time she was headed into! By her sophomore year she was starting to have horrific nerve and muscle pain, along with severe chronic fatigue. Sometimes her muscles hurt so bad that she couldn't do her homework. She had trouble eating because she couldn't lift a utensil – it was too uncomfortable. She'd cry herself to sleep as she faced insomnia, in spite of battling severe fatigue. Bridget did not know how she'd be able to finish her studies. Her health struggles took a tremendous toll on her sister and her mom who cried along with her. Bridget was finally diagnosed with fibromyalgia after several years of tests and doctor visits.

Even with all she faced, she STILL was not going to trust God with her struggles. She thought she could handle things on her own. Over the next several years, her health continued to decline, as well as her determination and outlook on life. One night she cried out to God, telling Him that her life was useless and that she could not do anything with it. She thought it would be better to die, as she really didn't think God could use her in any way. Bridget told God that night that she would give her life over to Him to do with whatever He wanted because she sure couldn't do anything on her own. That night was a turning point in her life. It had started out so hopeless, but ended in true hope and peace.

The rest of college went by in a blur for Bridget. She got more involved with Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru) and church activities. She even went on a mission's trip to Azerbaijan for a month during her senior year. She struggled tremendously but managed to graduate with a degree in Social Work and cum laude honors – by God's grace!

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Bridget started to see that God really could use her, in spite of her health challenges. She ended up going on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ and lived in Orlando, Florida for three years as she worked at CCC Headquarters in International Ministries. Raising financial support and serving staff overseas changed her life greatly. She went to Thailand twice to help minister to staff. She started singing on the praise team when she lived in Florida. Her health challenges continued, however, and more issues surfaced. She had daily migraines that haunted her as she tried to work. Florida, it turns out, aggravated her allergies and migraines. One day as she was getting an MRI on her back, her neurologist found a golf-ball sized cyst on her left ovary. After additional doctor's visits, she found she also had severe endometriosis. She ended up having her first surgery, alone, in Orlando. The doctor told her she would never be able to have children. Even though Bridget was not married or in a relationship at the time, she'd always thought she would have children. She grieved deeply over this and cried for over three months. She would put on a stoic face during the day to only cry all night long once she got home. It was such a hard time for her – especially without family nearby. She was going to need further treatment and surgery and she decided to move back to Michigan to be closer to family.

One of the things Bridget took from Florida was a love for art. While being a missionary she sent out a lot of cards – and since she was a quilter, she thought of a unique way to make cards using fabric. She would design a pattern and then make it out of fabric. She could then scan the originals and make cards, stationery, and prints. People thought this was so interesting that she decided to write a craft book, *Fabric Cards*, which was published in 2005 by a small publisher. Her cards were also featured on HGTV's Caroll Duvall show in 2004.

It was around this time, that Bridget also began writing devotionals for several ministries and to date has had around 200+ published. She's even had some devotionals published in the local newspapers and at work. Much of what she writes about, is how God encourages her through her illnesses. She's also had her testimony printed in several magazines and newspapers. Bridget now suffers with fibromyalgia, endometriosis, severe asthma, Hashimoto's thyroid disease, migraines, severe allergies, and arthritis. She's had ten different surgeries, including hip surgery, a hysterectomy, ankle surgery and two hand surgeries.

Bridget started working for Hope Network Neuro Rehabilitation in 2004 in the Finance Department and continues to this day, by God's grace. She enjoys serving in church in any way she can – whether it's by singing on the praise team, teaching Bible study, or coordinating the library. She tries to make as much use of her time as she can. She hosted a foreign exchange student from Thailand in 2020 and had a teen foster daughter in 2021.

Looking back on Bridget's life, a stranger might think, "What has she done that she set out to do? She's not married. She can't have children. She doesn't own a home. She's living with her sister. She still struggles with her health every single day.... what good is her life?"

Oh friends, Bridget has accomplished so much more than she ever dreamed – going overseas, writing a book, writing devotionals for several ministries, ministering to many children over the years, teaching God's Word and helping others grow in Christ – such great things. God is not done with her yet. She looks forward to seeing what else God will do through her!

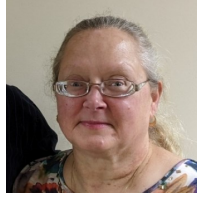
When you let God write your story, He takes you on a journey so much bigger than you could ever imagine. If all we do is focus on what we can't do, we certainly won't do anything. But, if we let God do what He wants in our lives, it truly can be a great adventure. We are so thankful to Bridget for all she does here at Nortonville, and we hope that her testimony will be an encouragement to you all!



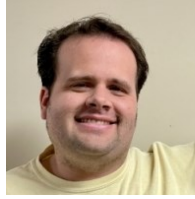
## March Birthdays



March 9  
Robbie Snider



March 9  
Nancy Coon-Hawkey



March 12  
Jared Bartow



March 16  
Jim Stellema



March 27  
Jim Dufford



March 28  
Melissa Dalman



March 31  
Emily Hildebrandt

## Upcoming Events

- |         |                                     |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 3/10-11 | Church Ministries Conference        |
| 3/14    | Board Meeting 5:30 pm               |
| 3/16    | Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7:00 pm     |
| 3/22    | Robbinswood Church Services 1:30 pm |
| 3/23    | Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7:00 pm     |