Prayers of the People

Birthdays this Week:

11 Randi McFarland, Lynchburg, VA (CH)
11 Laura Senter, Everett, WA (CH)
12 Myles Fleming, San Antonio, TX (CH)
12 Melba Miller, Gainesville, GA (CH)
12 Ben Newell, Emeritus (FP)
12 Terry-Michael Newell, Zebulon, NC (PC)
12 Loren (Greg) Sink, Fayetteville, NC (Ret-CH)
13 Lloyd Blevins, Fayetteville, NC (CH)
13 Bob Newell, Emeritus (FP)
13 John Painter, Charleston, SC (CH)
13 Gretchen Watson, Louisville, KY (PC)
14 Yarelis Montes de Oca, Miami, FL (CH)
14 Yuri Sekscinski, Temple, TX (CH)
16 Matthew Andrews, Birmingham, AL (CH)
16 Karen Black, Fort Worth, TX (CH)
16 Betty Drayton, Sumter, SC (CH)
16 Greg Greason, Kansas City, MO (Ret-CH)
16 Sarah Neeley, Tyler, TX (CH)
16 Monty Self, Little Rock, AR (CH)
17 David Fambrough, Greenville, NC (CH)

CH = Chaplain
EP = Engagement Partner
FP = Field Personnel
FPC = Child of Field Personnel
PC = Pastoral Counselor
S = CBF Staff Member

OCTOBER 11
Offering for Global Missions

"O God, the sea is so great, and my boat is so small," we may be tempted at times to pray with the fisherfolk in Brittany who are credited with this desperate little breath prayer—no time, no energy, no attention for longer, more considered or fuller language. No head or heart space for expressing our overwhelm at the enormity of the task before us—a hurting world, aching people, a distinct lack of connection and community.

How tempting it is to throw up our hands when expectations outpace resources, when needs tower over our perceived ability to respond. When our boat is small, and the sea is great.

This week we as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship honor the work of Global Missions and consider how our own offerings and prayers can make us part of the joyful work. And I imagine that for our field personnel, serving in 13 countries around the world, the greatness of the "sea" and the smallness of their own "boat" can both be daunting as they seek to proclaim with word, deed, life and relationship the good news of God's great love.

But friends, the miracle of community means that we are never alone in our boat, or perhaps that we are never the only boat in the great sea! We are not only related to each other, but we are also all related to the One who holds our small boats and the great sea in loving embrace. All are held.

When I hear Jesus' words from John 15:5, I am reminded of this connectedness:
"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

We need not be lone boats on a vast sea. We are branches of the vine that is Jesus Christ, receiving our life through Christ and intimately connected to him. And because we are connected to the vine, we are connected through Christ to one another—branches all. As branches of one vine, let us find ways to support the mission and ministry endeavors of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as we cultivate beloved community and bear witness to Jesus Christ.

Loving God, you who hold small boats and great sea alike, your embrace is wide and strong. When the work ahead is daunting, we pray for daily encouragement, strength, active hope, and sparks of joy. We lift those who have devoted vocation and calling to lives of ministry and mission as field personnel, the communities and settings where they serve, and the families and communities that support their efforts.

We pray for the Offering for Global Missions, that those of us who participate in ministry and mission by giving will do so gratefully, seriously and with hopeful anticipation, that your love be known and nurtured among all people.

Amen.

About the Author: *Rev. Leigh Anne Armstrong is a CBF-endorsed chaplain, writer and music teacher from Auburn, Ala., serving as Pastor (stated supply) of First Presbyterian Church, Eufaula, Ala., with her MDiv, PCC from BSK Theological Seminary. She writes weekly Lectionary-based liturgy, worship aids and encouragement as resources for ministers.*