


LOVE + SERVE
the least of these





“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me...Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the Least of These my brothers, you did it to me.”

– Matthew 25: 34-40

At the heart of the gospel is the person of Jesus Christ. His life is our example. His death is our victory and His resurrection is our hope. He is the ultimate expression of God’s love, and He showed us that to truly live, means to love and to serve well.

Carmel is a church that values and is *FOR* the preborn, the orphan, the refugee, the person needing a second chance, those with a disability, the victim of human trafficking, and those living in poverty.

Because we believe that *what you are for*, determines *who you are going to spend your time with*, we are asking you and your family to prayerfully consider two questions:

- What are you *FOR*?
- Who are you going to spend time *WITH* because of it?

Use this catalog as an opportunity to learn, connect and pray for the Least of These. We pray that God will make it abundantly clear what “you are for,” and that His Spirit will move you to follow Jesus’ example and teaching to *Love and Serve the Least of These*.

For Freedom

She was frustrated with mom and dad and ran away from home. She was looking for anyone who would help her, and fell into a trap that enslaved her and took her dignity, her purity, and her hope...



Human trafficking starts with recruitment or harboring through a threat or use of force, abuse of power, or deception. It is done for the purpose of exploitation, which includes forced labor, sexual exploitation and exploiting the prostitution of others.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”

—Galatians 5:1

- Some estimates show that **over 50%** of girls and women in prostitution are **runaway or homeless youth** lacking support networks. They are often targeted by traffickers at shelters or other public places.
- Traffickers target **victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or war and conflict** because their prior abuse leaves them vulnerable. Many of these women are susceptible to human trafficking because of their deep rooted feelings of shame or unworthiness.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for all of the runaway girls in the US, escaping problems at home and at immediate risk of being approached by a pimp and exploited physically and emotionally.
- Pray for the men and women struggling with pornography addictions. Pray that God will turn their focus onto Him and that this industry, which directly supports human trafficking, will be starved of money and users.
- Pray that women in emotional and physical bondage will be able to escape. Pray that they will be cared for, encouraged, empowered and able to start a new life of Freedom through Christ's love.

How to Love & Serve:

- Be **informed** about how your everyday choices support slavery. Take the slavery footprint quiz for everyday products.
- **Prevent, intervene and instruct** our loved ones about harmful effects of pornography. Implement safety nets like Covenant Eyes, or seek support from others if actively struggling with this issue.
- Seek out opportunities to **support and encourage** girls in poverty, who are at a high risk of falling into trafficking. Support and mentor women in prison who may have suffered physical or emotional abuse, and may be at risk of trafficking.
- Support women who are coming out of trafficking by **purchasing their products**. Examples include Suti Sana, Fields of Hope and Fashion & Compassion.

Contact:

ForFreedom@carmelbaptist.org

Joy

She loves her son more than anything she can imagine, but the days can be so long as she cares for his specific needs. “Is there anyone out there that can give me some help?”



Joy ministry serves those with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability and their families or caregivers. This ministry also calls the church to embrace and welcome anyone with a physical disability.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness’..God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” - *Genesis 1:26-27*

- **46%** of parents and caregivers report that they have more responsibilities for providing care than they can handle.
- **88%** of caregivers report suffering from **physical fatigue** and **81%** report **emotional stress**.
- **52%** of families say their loved ones with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities are **unable to get job training** or other assistance they need to keep a job.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for family caregivers, who often face tremendous emotional and physical stress. Pray that God would give them peace, energy and strength to sustain their journey.
- Pray that Carmel would be a church that is welcoming and loving to families affected by disabilities.
- Pray for individuals living with intellectual and physical disabilities and for the daily obstacles they face.

How to Love & Serve:

- Serve as a **teacher** in one of the Joy Discipleship community classes at Carmel.
- Be a **host** for Joy Prom or Joyful Hearts Club.
- **Adopt** a group home and bring meals, supplies and coordinate special nights.
- **Mentor and encourage** an adult with I/DD seeking employment.
- Support a parent or caregiver by **providing respite care**.
- **Tutor/mentor** school age students with disabilities.
- Be a **buddy** at a Special Olympics event.

Contact:

JoyMinistry@carmelbaptist.org

Voice for Life

“This wasn’t supposed to happen. I’m...pregnant? What am I going to do? I can’t handle this, and need to find an answer...”



The preborn are the Imago Dei, the image of God, that are developing inside of their mother’s womb. As the most oppressed people group in the world today, the church is called to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed.” – Proverbs 31:8

“Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” – *Psalms 139:16*

- In 2011 there were **8491 abortions** performed in Mecklenburg county.
- The Pregnancy Resource Center in Charlotte **counsels over 300** clients per month.
- In 2006, **49%** of pregnancies were unintended.
- Among women aged 19 years and younger, more than **4 out of 5 pregnancies are unintended.**

Prayer Points:

For the abortion minded client:

- Pray for Christ to reveal Himself to these women so they can choose life.
- Pray that Christ leads them to the local Pregnancy Resource Center where they will receive resources to help them in their crisis and hear God’s truth that everyone, including the preborn, are created in the image of God.

For single moms/potential birth moms:

- Pray that as these precious ladies seek to raise their children God would meet their every need.
- Pray that the Lord will become their strength and salvation.

How to Love & Serve:

- **Mentor or lead** a Bible study for pregnant girls and women in a care home.
- Coordinate a **game or craft night** for pregnant girls in a care home.
- Provide **administrative support** for agencies serving women with unplanned pregnancies.
- Intentionally **disciple** a young person and encourage them to embrace “Purity for Life.”
- **Participate in, recommended or pray** for women in “Surrendering the Secret,” which provides healing and hope after abortion.

Contact:

VoiceforLife@carmelbaptist.org

Mosaic

He is a shy 11 year-old boy who has been in and out of foster care, bottling up every frustration and fear of rejection. She is an 8 year-old girl who has waited and dreamt of her forever family for years, but her country just halted international adoption. Based on statistics, she will die before she reaches her 9th birthday.

They range in age from infants to teenagers, all without a family to provide for their most basic needs. Children are orphaned for a wide range of reasons, including war, poverty, and death. They live halfway across the world, and they live just down the street.

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” - *James 1:27*

- There are **170 million orphans** worldwide and **400,000 children** in U.S. foster care.
- Currently **675** children are **waiting** to be adopted in North Carolina.
- The average age of a child waiting to be adopted is **7.8** years old.
- It takes **one caring adult** to make a life-long difference for a child.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that God would give you a heart like His, that your heart would be flooded with compassion toward those without a family.
- Pray for ways to be an advocate for orphans. God has given you a circle of influence. Pray for boldness in speaking out.
- Pray for the children in foster care. Their lives are marked by insecurity and the unknown. Pray that they would find their forever families soon.

How to Love & Serve:

- **Send** a birthday card to a foster child.
- **Bring** a student to the U.S.
- **Host** an orphan for the holidays.
- **Tutor** a child that is newly home.
- **Sit with** a family during doctor's appointments for their children with unique medical needs.
- **Run errands** and gather mini medical kits.
- **Take a meal** to an adoptive family.
- **Write a letter** of encouragement.
- **Foster** a child.
- **Sponsor** a child.

Contact:

Mosaic@carmelbaptist.org

Poverty

As he hears his child's stomach grumble, and watches his wife shiver from the cold, a father wonders where the next meal will come from. Who will give them a place to sleep? And what will tomorrow bring?



Poverty is the state of being poor or lacking the means to provide material needs. It is also a state of mind that robs individuals of their dignity, keeping them in a cycle of dependence on others.

“For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.” - *Psalm 72:12-14*

- **14% of families** in Mecklenburg county are living in poverty.
- From 2005-2010 the sheer number of Mecklenburg county residents in poverty **increased 58%** while overall population rose 18% over the same time frame.
- Students 16 to 24-years-old who come from low income families are **seven times** more likely to **drop out** than those from families with higher incomes.
- **40%** of children living in poverty aren't prepared for primary schooling.
- **870 million** people worldwide do not have enough to eat.
- Approximately **30- 40%** of homeless people have **mental illness** and an even higher percentage suffer from **addiction disorders**.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that those needing a job will have an opportunity to work for a living wage and support their family with dignity.
- Pray for the thousands of people in Charlotte that are homeless, especially those that suffer from mental illness and addictions. Pray that they can access the treatment they need and experience healing.
- Pray for those that are hungry, here in Charlotte and globally. Pray that they will find food, drink and a way out of poverty.

How to Love & Serve:

- **Tutor and mentor** children in poverty through local organizations supporting families.
- Support someone seeking a job through **coaching, prayer, encouragement, and guidance**.
- Support agencies helping those in poverty by **donating food, clothes, and other necessities** that many families do without.

Contact:

Poverty@carmelbaptist.org

Refugee

“I was forced to leave my country with nowhere to go. I have no home, no resources, no job, and I don’t speak the language.”



A refugee is someone who flees, often to another country, seeking refuge from war, political oppression, religious persecution, or a natural disaster.

“I was a stranger, and you invited me in.”

- *Matthew 25:25*

- The U.S. admits up to **70,000** refugees for resettlement annually.
- North Carolina is the **10th largest resettlement** state in the US. Mecklenburg county resettles over **500 refugees annually**.
- The majority of the thousands of resettled refugees in Charlotte are from the **“10/40” window**, the area of the world including Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa that is home primarily to Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that God would open the eyes of the greater church in Charlotte to see and meet the needs of our growing refugee population.
- Pray that the refugees in the community would experience the love of Jesus, and know that they don’t have to be alone.
- Pray that God would raise up workers both in the American and Refugee communities with eyes set on Jesus and hearts for the people God has brought to our city.
- Pray that God will preserve the unity of believers as we minister side by side, despite our different backgrounds, languages, and cultures.

How to Love & Serve:

- **Engage** your family in intentional relationships with refugee families.
- **Help** a new refugee family “learn the ropes” of American culture.
- Help older refugees **study** for their citizenship exam and **practice** English.
- Serve as a **mentor** or **tutor** for a child.

Contact:

Refugee@carmelbaptist.org

Second Chances

He is trying so hard to right his wrong, and he has served his punishment. Will anyone give him a shot to try again?

A Second Chance provides someone coming out of prison or escaping addiction an opportunity for a fresh start. This new start may include a job, counseling, housing, or friendships, but the single most important piece is their understanding that they are a new creation in Christ, and their identity is in Him.

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

- John 8:36

- Studies have found that up to **94%** of incarcerated women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse in their lives. Between **66%** and **75%** are survivors of domestic violence.
- There are over 5,000 homeless men and women in the Charlotte area and **65-80%** of this number struggles with **substance addiction**.
- **One (1) out of every four (4) people** attending church is affected by addiction. They may not be addicts themselves; however, the statistic includes both personal addiction or someone in their immediate sphere of influence or relational impact (parent, spouse, child, co-worker, close friend, etc.).

Prayer Points:

- Pray that those who are incarcerated may feel the encouragement and peace that can only come from God. Pray that they will have endurance to use their time in jail or prison as much as possible for their benefit, growing in their faith and determination to make healthy choices.
- Pray for our neighbors who are in transition, who face obstacles in their lives as we all do - but often with limited financial resources or social capital. Pray for them to be steadfast in their new ways of living, and for God to continue His healing, and for them to use their stories of redemption to touch the lives of others.
- Pray that each of those escaping addiction will understand and believe in their identity as being a “loved” child of God who is always present with them.

How to Love & Serve:

- **Write cards** of encouragement to incarcerated men and women.
- Serve as a **mentor** and **regularly visit** a man or woman in prison.
- **Serve meals** and visit with participants in rehabilitation.
- **Pray for, encourage and disciple** those who are struggling with addictions and their families.

Contact:

Secondchances@carmelbaptist.org

Carmel partners with local ministries to support their efforts to Love and Serve the Least of These. There are other organizations we work with informally that are not listed here. For a full list of opportunities contact the appropriate Least of These Ministry.

Beds for Kids - bedsforkids.org

Beds for Kids mission is to provide a bed and other essential furniture to every child and family in need in Charlotte.

Changed Choices - changedchoices.org

Changed Choices aims to provide mental, emotional, physical and spiritual assistance to highly motivated women both during their incarceration and as they transition back into society, thus enabling them to make positive changes in their lives and to achieve self-sufficiency.

Charlotte Rescue Mission - charlotterescuemission.org

CRM ministers the Good News of Christ to individuals caught in the cycles of poverty, hopelessness, or chemical addictions by meeting their spiritual, physical, social, psychological, and vocational needs.

Christ our Shepherd Kids - Child Development Center - cosministries.org

Christ Our Shepherd, following Christ's example of love and compassion, strives to provide quality, Christian-based children's programs

and education for all children, regardless of family structure; while empowering and ministering to the unique needs of single parents.

Habitat for Humanity Matthews - habitatmatthews.org

By the grace of God, HFHM improves lives by building communities and facilitating successful home ownership with people in need of decent, affordable homes.

Jackson Park Ministries - jacksonpark.org

JPM exists to transform the lives of distressed low-income families and at-risk children located in our neighborhood, the greater Charlotte community and beyond.

Joni and Friends - joniandfriends.org

Joni and Friends exists to communicate the Gospel and equip Christ-honoring churches worldwide to evangelize and disciple people affected by disabilities.

Lois Lodge - loislodge.org

Lois' Lodge is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help women and families experiencing an unexpected pregnancy.

Love, INC - loveinc-charlotte.org

The mission of Love In the Name of Christ is to mobilize believers in Christ to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, elderly and disabled in our community.

Pregnancy Resource Center - prccharlotte.com

Pregnancy Resource Center of Charlotte is a non-profit, non-denominational, non-political organization that is committed to providing compassion, information and support to anyone facing the challenge of unintended pregnancy.

Project658 - project658.com

Project 658 exists to find Christ centered solutions for Charlotte communities through education, feeding, training, public health, assistance, and sports outreach programs.

With Love From Jesus - withlovefromjesuscharlotte.org

WLFJ exists to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and homeless of our community.



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