

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2023

THE UPPER ROOM®

WHERE THE WORLD MEETS TO PRAY



DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

THUR
SEPT 21
2023

BUILDING BRIDGES

READ Mark 9:38-41

Jesus said, "Whoever is not against us is for us."

— Mark 9:40 (NRSVUE)

I pastor a church that has a long-running program to serve our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness or food insecurity. Every Monday, our campus turns into a hub for people to find food and clothing, access social services, or connect with other resources. Each year we serve thousands

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
The bridges we build can connect others to Jesus.

of meals, distribute tens of thousands of pounds of groceries, and give away thousands of clothing items.

This program is run almost entirely by vol-

unteers. Some of them are members of our church — but remarkably, most are not. The volunteers who come to serve are as varied as our city. Some are religious, while others are not. Bringing in so many volunteers from outside our congregation can sometimes make my church members worry that we might lose our Christian identity.

Indeed, we have Christian convictions we cannot compromise. But another truth of our faith is at work here. "No one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me," Jesus said (Mk. 9:39). When those from outside our church join us in the work of Christ, we all become more receptive to Jesus. As we are drawn into the life-giving work of God, we have more opportunities to see the good news come alive.

Prayer: Dear God, help us reach out to others every day. Show us how we can offer compassion and hope to your children in need. Amen.

Andrew Garnett (Virginia, USA) — See back cover.

MEET SOME OF OUR WRITERS

(Here and on p. 21.)



Tomeka B. Scales (p. 54) is a communications professional currently working at a church. She enjoys planning events.



H. Michael Brewer (p. 44) is retired from teaching. He loves harvesting wild foods and cultivating his bee garden.



Melinda Burleson Box (p. 7) is a retired teacher who loves to read, walk, sew, and connect with her four grandsons.



Andrew Garnett (p. 28) is a pastor and enjoys hiking, visiting historical sites, and playing board games.



Elly Cantrell Gilbert (p. 29) is a wife, mom of three teens, puppy rescuer, and author living in beautiful central Kentucky.



John Hall (p. 38) is a retired sales professional and business owner. He and his wife, Ann, are very proud of their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

