

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 1 —



Emilio and Hannah Marrero

### ***Henar faced a crushing betrayal that threatened to consume her newfound hope.***

Two years ago, the International Mission Board shared the story of Henar, a woman deeply involved in New Age spirituality, searching for truth in crystals, meditation, and other alternative practices. Everything changed when she met IMB missionaries Emilio and Hannah Marrero and came to saving faith in Christ.

Not long afterward, Henar's husband abandoned her.

The Marreros knew Henar's suffering would be a measure of her faith. With time, it became clear. Though Henar was crushed by her circumstances, she clung to her faith in Christ.

Just a year earlier, Henar's husband had been instrumental in helping Hannah, a musician and singer, start a ministry hosting open mic nights at a local gathering spot. The monthly events offered a place for people to perform, connect, and explore life's big questions, like what it means to be human.

After Henar's husband left, Hannah wasn't sure this ministry would continue. When the business owner encouraged them to keep coming, Hannah approached Henar about emceeing.

"It was so hard for her to do the first one, but it ended up being probably one of our most hilarious and fun and Spirit-filled evenings," Hannah said. "She has a big heart for helping people express themselves and use their giftings to tell a message."

***Will you pray for more Spanish ministry partners, like Henar, to expand the reach of the gospel?***

Using their giftings to call people to Christ — and helping others do the same — is at the core of the Marreros' work as church planters.

"We are being creative in a way that elevates the gospel and tells the grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption, restoration," Hannah said, "using art to pull on some heartstrings and then letting the Holy Spirit do the rest."

They recalled how Emilio's art resonated deeply with Henar when she first encountered the gospel. A graphic designer and artist, his vibrant posters pair provocative images with words that strike at the heart of the culture, urging people to wake up and consider their eternity.

QR codes on the posters link to a website where people can join an online Bible study, like the one where the Marreros first connected with Henar. Three years ago, one of their online communities led to a church plant, which has more than doubled in size.

### ***Ask God to grant more creativity and open doors for Emilio and Hannah.***

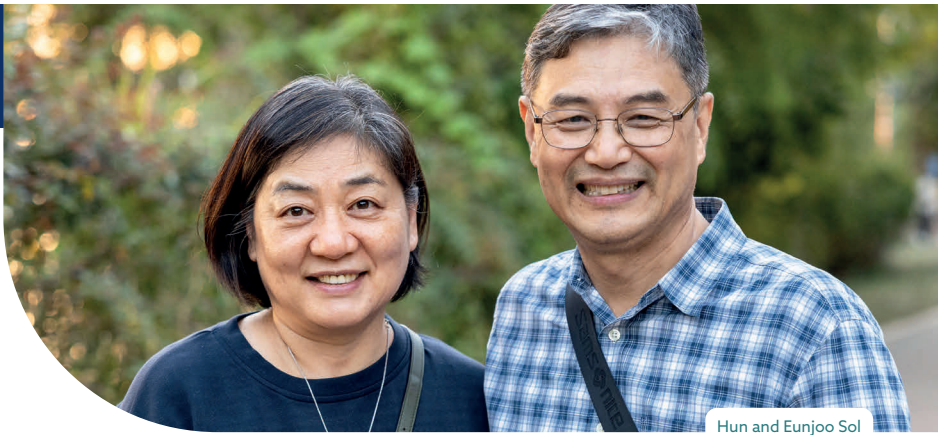
After nearly a decade of life and ministry in the Basque region of Spain, the Marreros expressed excitement to see their work now flourishing within the context of the local church. They have no plans for slowing down.

Whether by creating art or making music, the Marreros look forward to reaching people for Christ, discipling local believers, and empowering the local church to "keep going, further, and further out."

***Praise God for the new church that now meets in Spain and ask that God would use them powerfully for His sake.***

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 2 —



Hun and Eunjoo Sol

### ***As the sun goes down over South Korea, another life ends in suicide.***

The sad statistics in the country called the Land of the Morning Calm still affect International Mission Board missionaries Hun and Eunjoo Sol.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in South Korea among those in their teens, 20s, and 30s. Combine these sobering statistics with fewer young people involved in church or wanting anything to do with faith and the Sols have reason to ask God for a big vision. Their vision includes a church plant on all 48 university campuses by the end of 2028.

When they consider how often Koreans are dying without Christ, they have no time to waste.

### ***Pray God will fulfill the vision of 48 churches reaching every university campus in Seoul.***

Hun and Eunjoo are thankful for a second-floor space in a building of a busy Seoul neighborhood. Their missionary team uses the rooms to host two church plants, English-conversation groups, and trauma-healing ministries. The space, strategic to their ministry, is provided by the generosity of Southern Baptists. The small location serves a big mission field.

Hun and Eunjoo lead a team of IMB missionaries serving in Seoul. Specifically, this team focuses their ministry on college students and young adults living in and among Seoul's 48 universities.

Hun and Eunjoo are dedicated to bringing an authentic and loving gospel into people's lives, often through non-traditional ways. They are seeing significant response to trauma-healing ministry. They call it THinK — Trauma Healing in Korea. Through this ministry, young people

can receive a listening ear and non-medical counseling, while also pointing people to the hope of the gospel.

Hun said they see their ministry as two-fold.

"We want to help Korean churches train missionaries and start churches, and we want to reach students with the gospel and connect them to a Christian community."

### ***Pray with the Sols for God to grow their missionary team. Ask God to heal Eunjoo from a medical condition that affects her vocal cords. Much of her ministry is speaking and leading, which has become difficult.***

The Sols met on a praise team of their Korean church when they were in college. They moved to California to lead a church and start their family. After 18 years of Hun pastoring in San Jose, California, the Sols felt God call them to another international mission field. Forced to leave the first country where they served with the IMB, they considered a need for Korean Americans to help strengthen IMB's relationship with Korean Baptists.

"I didn't expect to be back in my home country, but I knew God could use me here," Hun said.

The Sols have an important perspective on how Christianity has faded in Korea. Once thriving churches are now very small and aging. Young people show little interest in healthy churches in a country where the influence of cults is very strong.

### ***Your prayers matter to the work in South Korea. Ask God's Spirit to move across the country with hope and healing.***

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 3 —



Katee Sheppard

### ***The story is still unfolding, and there's work to do.***

Christians in West Africa learned about their role in God's story through rocks. Now, if you're wondering what rocks have to do with anything, keep reading.

Church members watched the line of rocks grow. One by one, more rocks were added, until there were 22 in formation. For each rock, a believer told a Bible story.

International Mission Board missionary Katee Sheppard trains West African believers to use rocks to share 22 stories from creation to Revelation.

Teaching believers how to share the gospel using stories is life-changing, the missionary said, because it leads and equips them to recognize the intentionality of turning a regular conversation into a spiritual conversation. For people in the world who prefer to learn orally or for those without a Bible in their language, Bible storying methods present the gospel in a fashion that is easy to retain and is reproducible for the listener.

### ***Pray these Bible storying methods will continue to change lives as people grasp the gospel for the first time.***

During a training time using the rocks and stories, Katee directed participants to leave a large space in between the story of Paul and Silas and the stone representing the second coming. Katee asked the congregation, "Why do you think there is such a big space in between the last two stones?"

Someone piped up, "Because that's us. Those are our stories."

The church recognizes that this is their time, their task, and their responsibility. Now they feel better equipped to spread the gospel.

Mariam, one of the believers on the storying team, stood before the congregation and seamlessly wove the stories that the 22 stones represented into a narrative.

### ***Pray for Mariam and other members of the evangelism team as they continue to train more people in this storying method.***

The following Sunday, church members went into the community with their stories. Katee wasn't sure how many would come. She wondered if they'd feel nervous, but the congregation came excited.

Five people made professions of faith. One of the believers was shocked to find someone she shared the gospel with had never heard the creation story. Katee said it was like a light went on in her mind.

"There's work to do here," the believer reported back to the church.

Everything clicked with the congregation. With five members fully trained, Katee passed the ministry baton on to the church members.

Katee said this is her goal in ministry — local leadership championing the work — so that she's worked herself out of a job. The Lord will have more work for her to do with others.

### ***Ask God to bring more missionaries and West African ministry partners to this region so more lives will be transformed.***

\*Some names changed for security reasons

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 4 —



Landon and Megan Williams

### ***It took a flight. A ferry. A truck ride. Traveling on foot.***

The trip was worth the effort.

Forty remote islands in southern Chile have little gospel knowledge and access, but we pray that will soon change. International Mission Board missionary Landon Williams clings to the promise given in Isaiah 42:4 that the coastlands will wait expectantly for God's law.

Earlier this year, Landon brought a pastor from a church in Kentucky and a Chilean missionary to island communities to investigate how they can get the gospel to these remote areas. To their joy, they found people waiting expectantly on the coastlands.

On one island they met Moisés and Yované. The couple built a church 27 years ago with their bare hands, cutting each piece of wood. Pillows with crocheted covers rest on chairs. Posters with printed Psalms adorn the sea-foam green walls. A handmade cloth is draped over the pulpit, with "I am the vine" from John 15.

They have no pastor, but Moisés and Yované call people on their remote island to worship with them all the same.

### ***Plead with the Lord to send a pastor to the remote island church.***

Landon and his wife, Megan, serve in Santiago, and their vision is to mobilize churches in this global city to reach the nations. The Williamses traveled to southern Chile with a team from Santiago and a team from Grace Baptist Church

to partner with Chilean missionary Carlos Carrasco and investigate how they could help reach the islands.

Landon estimates less than 20% have a local body of believers. He believes that together, they will reach the lost of Chile with the gospel.

### ***Take a moment to pray for Landon and Megan Williams as they mobilize Chilean believers to fulfill the Great Commission.***

Rodrigo Dörner is a Chilean church leader in a port city among the islands. As Rodrigo sat with Landon, Todd, and Carlos in the small island church, he began to understand God's call on his life to lead believers to reach beyond their own island. He saw how his church could be the answer to this couple's prayer.

Landon and the team prayed for Rodrigo before leaving. They prayed he would cast vision, lead, and train leaders who could go to the remote island.

"As we take the gospel further out," Landon said, "as we lean into the vision from Isaiah, we realize that we're leaning into the promises of God. To this day, there are coastlands, or faraway places, that have yet to hear the gospel."

Landon encourages Chilean believers to learn "they can be a part of taking the gospel to the stretches that are further away from them to these people who have yet to hear, who need to know the saving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

### ***Pray for the gospel to travel to coastlands of Chile. Pray for Landon, Carlos, and Rodrigo as they seek to see the promise fulfilled.***

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 5 —



### ***A frozen body lay not far from where Anahita and her family huddled together.***

They shivered, trying to stay warm enough to survive the night. The frozen body was most likely a refugee following the mountainous escape route, but they never made it to a safe haven.

This wasn't the trajectory Anahita saw her life taking. Anahita, with her husband and children, escaped their homeland in Central Asia, traveling through several countries, sometimes on foot, with the goal of reaching a country in western Europe. It took her family four years of traveling and living in refugee camps to reach the country where they'd finally settle.

One of a mother's worst nightmares became a devastating reality when Anahita miscarried a baby.

International Mission Board missionary Freshta Aziz said the emotional pain, combined with culture shock, plunged Anahita into a deep depression that required psychiatric treatment. It was in this raw era of her life that Anahita began attending the women's ministry that Freshta hosted.

### ***Pray God gives Freshta wisdom as she ministers to women who've experienced compounded traumas.***

Freshta and her husband, Nawid, minister to refugees in western Europe. They spent time in the country many of the refugees call home. Nawid tells people they came to share that the Lord placed them on their hearts and there is a light no darkness can overcome.

Freshta is letting her light shine among these women. During group meetings, she shares a Bible story before introducing a craft that connects to a gospel message. One week she taught the women how to make candles and shared that through His sacrifice, we can live eternally in the light.

The candle Anahita made now holds symbolic meaning for her. It's a reminder that Jesus is the light. These types of lessons helped her overcome depression. She now attends church with Nawid and Freshta, and her husband committed his life to Christ. Anahita has yet to decide, but the Azizes pray she will choose to follow Him as well.

### ***Will you pray now that Anahita will make the decision to follow Christ?***

In addition to ministering to non-believing refugees, the Azizes also serve Christian refugees, many of whom came to faith in refugee camps. Nawid teaches the believers foundational theology and disciples them. The refugees cannot speak the local language, making attending local fellowships difficult, but the Azizes are fluent in their Central Asian language. The refugees treat Nawid and Freshta as one of their own.

Twenty-seven believers attended a Christmas party the Azizes hosted their first year living in the country. Last year, 53 people joined. This past summer, the Azizes invited 60 refugees to summer camps that consisted of Bible seminars for adults, a youth camp, and Vacation Bible School.

While grief and desolation are sign markers on the refugees' journeys, hope and new beginnings are the landmarks of their current season.

### ***Thank the Lord for the hope many refugees are finding. Pray the men and women living in trauma will find healing in the divine Healer.***

\*Some names changed for security reasons

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 6 —



Carlton and Cornelia Walker

### ***“It’s going to be one amazing journey.”***

Carlton Walker’s words to his wife more than 40 years ago ring true today. “It has been.”

When Cornelia Walker was in elementary school, her Girl’s Auxiliary group gave an assignment to pick a country and draw its flag and then learn about it.

Cornelia wasn’t a great artist, but there was one flag she thought she could manage. Japan’s flag was just a red circle on a white background. So, she picked it for her project.

At the time, she never imagined she’d pour over 40 years of her life into loving and serving the people she first learned about for that project.

After she met and married her husband, Carlton, they both felt God’s call to serve overseas. They learned there was a need for new missionaries in Japan, as many of the IMB workers who moved there after World War II were retiring.

“I think we both looked at each other and said ‘What about us? We can go,’” Cornelia said.

***Will you stop and thank God for the Walkers’ obedience to serve overseas and their steadfast presence for four decades? Ask God to send more workers to the fields of Japan.***

The seeds of that initial willingness to serve have blossomed into decades of fruitful ministry. In a country that is known to be resistant to the gospel and discouraging for many missionaries, Carlton and Cornelia have persevered faithfully.

They arrived in Japan on a spring evening in 1982 at the peak of cherry blossom season. As they turned into their neighborhood after a long drive from the airport, the street was carpeted in beautiful blossoms, and a crowd of other missionaries had gathered to welcome them.

After they completed language study in Tokyo, they moved to Hokkaido, Japan’s northernmost province. Over two decades, they saw Japanese people come to faith in Christ, planted a new church, and trained young pastors who went on to serve faithfully in churches all over Japan.

***Ask God for more Japanese churches to have a strong desire to spread the gospel.***

After 21 years in Hokkaido, the Walkers moved to Tokyo. A few years ago, their story in Japan came full circle when they were asked to move back to Hokkaido to mentor a new team of missionaries.

“I am so excited that God has opened doors for new young families and singles to come into the country at a time when it’s so needed,” Cornelia said.

Just as when they first arrived more than 40 years ago, they are confident God is still at work in Japan.

“We have a tendency to look at those who have served for a while, and we focus on their faithfulness,” Carlton said. “But my goodness, the bigger story is God’s faithfulness. He’s the one that gets the praise, the honor, and the glory.”

***Give God the praise, honor, and glory for His work among the nations. Ask God what further step you should take to join His work.***

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 7 —



Nick and Amber Sroka and family

### ***Their choice is unimaginable. Infanticide or rejection by their tribe.***

Many Indigenous families in Brazil experience rejection by their tribes because the families refuse to practice infanticide. This cruel tradition, which involves the killing of babies born with birth defects, incurable diseases, or in cases of twins and unwanted pregnancies, is still observed by some tribes in Brazil.

International Mission Board missionaries Nick and Amber Sroka are bringing the Light of Christ into this darkness.

This past summer, the sound of a hammer rang through the air as Amber hammered one nail after another into a round wooden block to form the shape of a cross. She passed the craft to her young friend Jessica to finish by wrapping colorful string around the cross.

The bright colors of the craft reflect the vibrant city of Brasilia, Brazil, where Amber and Nick live and serve. During the summer event, the Srokas worked with a Baptist church group from Missouri to host a VBS-style program at a local ministry center. Volunteers formed meaningful connections with children like Jessica, who was born with muscular dystrophy, and whose parents made the choice to leave their tribe to protect their child.

### ***Pray now that families would understand the worth of their children and that they hear the story of a God who loves them.***

While serving in support roles to other missionaries, the Srokas also stay involved in sharing the love of Jesus with those who do not know the good news. They cast that vision to others, like the Missouri Baptists whom they connected to families at a ministry center called ATINI.

ATINI means “voice” in one of the tribal languages. This center helps families receive medical care and get acclimated to a new living arrangement. The center also works to enroll children in local schools and provides tutoring.

The Srokas communicate with other IMB missionaries across Brazil to help identify and support families who experience similar tribal rejections or have children who need medical help that isn’t available where they live.

“When someone says, ‘Oh my child was born with this deficiency, I don’t know what to do,’ we can tell them about this great resource for families who face similar situations,” Amber said.

### ***Ask God to send more missionaries and more churches to bring the hope of the gospel to those who live in darkness without Him.***

The Srokas encourage the staff at ATINI who help these families. They coordinate volunteer mission groups from the U.S. to come to Brasilia and minister to the families, as well as complete service projects on the 10-acre campus. These visits not only provide support but also offer opportunities to share the gospel.

Edgar and Elisa live at ATINI with their five children, including Jessica. The couple make jewelry and woodcrafts to sell at local markets. Both Edgar and Elisa have made professions of faith in Christ and observed believer’s baptism. They are a testimony that transformation through the gospel is possible, even in the most hopeless of circumstances.

### ***Will you join the Srokas in thanking God for transformed lives and the power of the good news in Brazil?***

\*Some names changed for security reasons.

## Week of Prayer

— DAY 8 —



### ***Hat tricks and corner kicks were a part of Gabriel's journey to Jesus.***

Gabriel and his friends were looking for a place to play soccer. A missionary serving in his hometown opened her yard and offered to sponsor their soccer team with one condition: every other week the team studied the Bible with her.

The boys excitedly agreed. Through the Bible studies, Gabriel learned about God's great love for him. He became a Christian through this community outreach and answered a clear calling to dedicate his life to ministry.

Now, Gabriel is a director of a local ministry for his country.

"The burdens of the people here resonated with me. I knew I wanted to be part of their journey toward hope and faith," Gabriel said.

International Mission Board missionary Matt Clay serves people groups in the Horn of Africa. Matt and Gabriel are close friends and work together to form strategies to extend the gospel and effectively make disciples. Matt shared training materials about moving from evangelism to discipleship and then forming healthy churches and leaders. Gabriel incorporated the training into his ministry ethos.

"My vision is to see a vibrant and growing church that not only transforms individual lives but also impacts communities," Gabriel said.

### ***Pray the Lord continues to give Gabriel direction as he plans and dreams about how to invest in local leaders.***

Matt and Gabriel spend intentional opportunities in the Word. They also spend time together in the community. They call it "With Me" time, taken from Mark 3:14, when Jesus appointed the 12 people He'd equip and send out.

When Gabriel and Matt meet, they sometimes talk through ministry strategies; other times they just hang out, enjoying one another's company. The time also applies when they go into communities for outreach. They always bring someone with them, so their ministry efforts multiply.

At the end of the year, Matt and Gabriel sit down to celebrate and record activities and accomplishments. People Gabriel invested in have been sent out to minister in other areas.

"I've witnessed incredible transformation in individuals and communities," Gabriel said. "People are coming to faith by hearing Bible stories, and there's a growing hunger for God's Word."

### ***Ask God to empower more local believers and send more workers to the unreached in this region.***

Gabriel said his partnership with Matt and the IMB has been invaluable.

"Their support has provided mentorship, prayer, resources, and training that have equipped me and my team for effective ministry," Gabriel said. "I deeply appreciate the collaborative spirit and the shared commitment to spreading the gospel, which has strengthened my work."

Gabriel and Matt's partnership goes both ways. Matt emphasized how invaluable Gabriel is — remarking on his wisdom and what a great asset his language and heritage is.

"We're all better together," Matt said.

### ***Thank God for missionaries like Matt and Gretchen Clay who serve among the peoples of the Horn of Africa.***

\*Names changed for security reasons.