

CALVARY COMMUNITY CHURCH

A Foundation of Grace

Faithful in Every Season

A Legacy Tribute to

Reverend Marcus A. Coleman

and First Lady Denise Coleman

20th Pastoral Anniversary
September 14, 2025
Calvary Community Church
Memphis, Tennessee

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

-- Rev. Marcus Coleman

A Note About This Gift

This tribute was built entirely from your own words, drawn from the sermons, prayers, and moments you have shared with your congregation over the past twenty years. Nothing here was invented or imagined. Every line belongs to you.

In twenty years of ministry at Calvary Community Church, you have preached on faith, healing, perseverance, and the God who does not change. You have prayed over the sick by name. You have baptized families across generations. You have called the children to the altar and given them crosses to wear home. You have wept at the pulpit and laughed at yourself. You have told your congregation, again and again. I love you and there is nothing you can do about it.

This collection honors twenty years of that ministry, in your voice, from your heart, to the people God placed in your care.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

Chapter One: On Faith

For twenty years, you have taught your congregation that faith is not a feeling. It is a daily decision. It is a choice made every morning when your feet hit the floor. A trust exercised in the parking lot, in the hospital waiting room, in the quiet hours when no one else is watching. You have never allowed your people to treat faith as something reserved for easy times.

"Faith is not the absence of fear. It is taking the next step even when you cannot see where you are going. God never promised us a map. He promised us His presence."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Stop waiting until everything lines up perfectly before you trust God. Everything lined up perfectly for the Israelites when they crossed the Red Sea. God parted those waters while they were still walking."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"When we wake up in the morning and we turn to put our feet on the floor, we trust that they are going to hold us up. That is faith. We exercise it all the time and we do not even realize it. But we need to be intentional about the faith we have in God."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

You have challenged your congregation not merely to believe, but to grow. To move from knowing about God to truly trusting Him, step by step, year by year.

Chapter Two: On Prayer

Perhaps no theme has marked your ministry more powerfully than your conviction that prayer is not a last resort. It is the first response. You have modeled this from the pulpit, calling your congregation to pray over everything, their children, their finances, their neighbors, their enemies. You have made prayer feel accessible to the person who has never kneeled before.

"Prayer is not a performance for God. He already knows what you need. Prayer is about positioning yourself. It is about getting your heart into agreement with His will."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"You cannot worry and pray at the same time. Those two things cannot occupy the same space. Choose prayer. Every time. Choose prayer."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Do not just pray when things go wrong. Pray on the good days too. Thank Him before you need Him. Let gratitude be the language of your normal."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"God hears the prayer that comes from a broken place just as clearly as the prayer that comes from a decorated pulpit. He does not require eloquence. He requires honesty."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

You have built a culture of prayer at Calvary that extends far beyond Sunday morning. The midweek prayer line, the altar calls, the prayer partners you have trained. Your congregation does not just pray. They know how to pray.

Chapter Three: On Perseverance

You have never pretended the walk is easy. You have told your congregation about your own seasons of doubt, your own hard years, the moments when you wondered if you had heard God correctly. And every time, you have turned back to the same truth. He is faithful. Keep going. He does not abandon what He starts.

"The enemy wants you to quit right before the breakthrough. That is his strategy. He does not attack people who are already finished. He attacks people who are about to win."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Trouble does not last always. I know it feels like it does. I know some of you have been in this same valley for a long time. But weeping endures for a night. Joy comes in the morning. Hold on."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Do not let your present circumstances define your future. God is not finished with your story. The last chapter has not been written yet."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

You have walked this road yourself, through seasons of loss, through personal challenges, through a world that has grown more difficult with each passing year. And you have kept showing up. Every Sunday. With your voice and your word and your love.

Chapter Four: On Family

Few themes appear more consistently across your preaching than the sanctity and strength of family. You have spoken plainly about the home as the first church, the marriage covenant as a sacred trust, and the responsibility parents carry for the spiritual formation of their children. You have not preached this from a distance. You have lived it openly before your congregation.

"The home is where the sermon gets tested. Anyone can preach it on Sunday. The question is whether you are living it on Tuesday."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Your children are not an interruption to your ministry. They are your first ministry. Before this congregation, before this pulpit, before anything else. Get that right first."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Marriage is not a contract you sign when things are good and tear up when things get hard. It is a covenant made before God. Honor it. Fight for it. Pray over it."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

The congregation has watched you honor First Lady Denise Coleman from this pulpit for twenty years. What you preach about marriage, your people have seen you practice. That consistency is a testimony all by itself.

Chapter Five: On Community

Your vision for Calvary Community Church has always extended beyond the walls of the building. You have spoken consistently about the church as a neighbor, a servant, and a voice in the community. You have organized food drives, back-to-school events, neighborhood prayer walks, and partnerships with local schools. You have made it clear that following Jesus is not a private matter.

"The church is not a museum for the righteous. It is a hospital for the broken. We are not here to keep the clean people clean. We are here to go get the ones nobody else is going to go get."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Memphis needs the church to be the church. Not a social club. Not a concert hall. The church. With its sleeves rolled up. In the streets. Loving people nobody else wants to love."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Every person who walks through that door has a story. Our job is not to judge the story. Our job is to help them find the Author who can redeem it."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

Calvary Community Church was founded in 1978. You have spent twenty years making sure it remains what its name promises. A community. Not just a congregation.

Chapter Six: On Hope

You preach hope with a particular urgency. Not a vague optimism but a grounded, scripture-rooted conviction that God is active, that He is working, and that the story is not over. You have delivered this message in good times and in hard times, to people celebrating and to people barely holding on. The message does not change. The God of the resurrection is still in the business of bringing things back to life.

"Whatever you have buried, God can raise. Whatever has died in your life, your marriage, your career, your dream. The God who raised Jesus from a sealed tomb is the same God who is working in your situation right now."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is confident expectation based on the character of God. He said it. He will do it. Period."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"You may be standing at the edge of your Red Sea right now. The water is in front of you and the enemy is behind you. Do not turn back. Lift your rod. God is about to make a way."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

For twenty years, you have been a carrier of hope in this city. People have come to Calvary broken and left with a reason to keep going. That is not a small thing. That is the work of the kingdom.

Chapter Seven: Where Heaven Meets Earth

This is what worship looks like when it is led by someone who has actually encountered God. Not a performance. Not a production. An invitation. You have consistently called your congregation into the presence of God and stayed there with them. You have led from a place of genuine encounter and your people have felt the difference.

"Worship is not the music before the sermon. Worship is the posture of a life surrendered to God. We should still be worshipping on Wednesday. On Friday. In the kitchen. On the way to work."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"When you walk into this place, leave what you carried in out there. You are standing on holy ground. Something happens in this room when the people of God gather with one heart and one purpose."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

"I need you to open your mouth and praise Him. Not because everything is perfect. Because He is. Praise Him in advance. Praise Him while you are still waiting. Praise changes the atmosphere."

-- Rev. Coleman, Sunday Morning Worship

For twenty years, you have made Sunday morning feel like the most important hour of the week. Your congregation leaves this place differently than they arrived. That is the fruit of a shepherd who worships.

A Closing Blessing

These are your own words, offered back to you on the occasion of your twentieth year at Calvary Community Church. Every quote in this collection came from your lips. Every prayer came from your heart. Every promise you spoke over your congregation, you first believed yourself.

You have told your people: I love you and there is nothing you can do about it.

We say the same to you.

*"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you a hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11

Congratulations, Reverend and First Lady Coleman.

Twenty years. Faithful. Every Sunday.

Calvary Community Church | Est. 1978 | Memphis, Tennessee