

Mission:Dignity Sunday set for June 23

By Susan Ervien

GuideStone Financial Resources

On June 23, Southern Baptists will again have the opportunity to honor unsung heroes of the faith – namely, retirement-aged Southern Baptist pastors, workers and their widows who served and abundantly blessed others during their years of ministry.

Widows represent 60% of recipients served by Mission:Dignity.

“The widows supported by Mission:Dignity served in places where little, if any, was contributed to retirement, much less life insurance,” GuideStone noted. “Many of these women face hardships alone including the natural consequences of aging or uncertain diagnoses and terminal conditions after the husband passes away unexpectedly or succumbs to a prolonged illness.

“Add our nation’s recent struggles with inflation, and we have a community of women in desperate need after faithfully serving the Lord. They deserve the honor of being cared for in their later years.”

One widow’s story

Mission:Dignity helps widows like Brenda Collins of Trussville, Alabama. Brenda and her late husband, Jim, served the Lord in churches all over Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma for 51 years.

“What I really loved the most was just being by his side,” Brenda recalled. “And when my children got older, I was able to go with him. I made every hospital visit. I made every home visit. We were connected at the hip. And so, God called us both into the ministry. He called Jim to preach and to be a

pastor. And he definitely called me to be a pastor's wife."

Stories like Brenda's, GuideStone noted, highlight the importance of Mission:Dignity.

"After Jim's death, I got a call from Mission:Dignity," Brenda said. "And I have to tell you that I honestly was surprised, but it was such a comfort and blessing to have them call me. Mission:Dignity not only provides security and peace of mind financially, but more importantly than that, Mission:Dignity feels like a friend."

Financial security, resilience

GuideStone President Hance Dilbeck noted, "At GuideStone, our mission is to enhance the financial security and resilience of those who serve the Lord."

He added, "We hear from our recipients weekly that these honorariums provide them with additional security – and dignity – in their daily lives. I'm thankful we can join churches across the Southern Baptist Convention to support these retired SBC pastors and widows."

The Southern Baptist Convention has set aside the fourth Sunday in June to celebrate and raise a special offering for Mission:Dignity.

Churches, Sunday school classes and other groups can order or download free Mission:Dignity Sunday materials from GuideStone or give at MDSunday.org. The materials are not dated, so churches can use them at any time of the year.

"With 100% of donations going directly to recipients, Mission:Dignity has financially assisted widows like Brenda with monthly needs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, medical bills and even house repairs, as well as care and support," said Aaron Meraz, director of Mission:Dignity.

Visit MDSunday.org for more information on this vital ministry

from GuideStone.