

MISSIONARY PROSPECTUS

A Journey of Faith | Pastor Michael J. Breznau | January 2023

Now over five years ago, the first message I preached here at Mayfair was entitled “Following the Mission of the Messiah” from Mark 8:22-38. This beautiful, thought-provoking passage describes Jesus’ healing of the blind man from Bethsaida in two-stages. The scene is rather peculiar and urges us to ask, “Why a two-step healing?” But Christ – in His sovereign knowledge – delivers two key questions, “Who do people say that I am?” and “But who do you say that I am?” (v. 27, 29). Meanwhile, the Savior led the disciples to Caesarea Philippi: a set of villages named after a Roman emperor, the furthest point away from Jerusalem in their travels, and most certainly not where they would have chosen to go.

Peter, ever the spokesman for the team, jumps up with the answer to the second question, “You are the Christ!” (v. 29). However, something is blurry and skewed in their vision of Jesus’ identity and mission. Therefore, Jesus begins to explain how he must “suffer many things and be rejected . . . and be killed . . .” (v. 31). But all this was too much for Peter to grasp. So, the one who just proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah now begins to rebuke Jesus. I can almost hear Peter screaming, “What!? This is not the plan! Talk about terrible PR! No way we’re moving forward with this messaging!”

But *grace*. Christ, in His patience, rebukes Peter (v. 33). God’s kingdom advances not by man’s interests but through God’s agenda. Jesus showed them a two-stage healing to ask those two vital questions *and* trotted them all the way out to Caesarea Philippi to teach them the key lesson: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” (v. 34b-35).

Lose your life to discover Life.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”
– Missionary Jim Elliot

This powerful narrative leads us to at least two trail-markers on the path of following Jesus:

1. God will take us where we would not choose to go in order to open our eyes to what we could never see on our own. *Even those heart-penetrating questions!*
2. God will take us where we would not choose to go in order to produce in us what we could never achieve on our own. *Even Caesarea Philippi... and the Cross!*

Today, God is calling my family and I to follow Him down a turn in the trail... into the mission field. Over the past year-and-a-half, God the Holy Spirit has been pressing on my soul to follow Christ’s mission on a path largely unknown and even terrifying. When I first sensed the gentle nudge of the

Spirit on my heart, my response went like this, “No! No. No way!” Every time the call to this mission field bubbled up, I continued, “Certainly not. We enjoy Your work here, Lord. We love Mayfair Bible Church. We love Flushing. Our kids are in great schools. You’ve given us a lovely home. You are working in wonderful ways here!”

Yet now for more than a year, Stephanie and I have been praying and no longer can resist God’s calling for us to be on mission with Jesus...*in the United States Air Force*. Specifically, to serve as an active duty chaplain to pastor, evangelize, and disciple airmen and their families with the gospel of Christ.

Christ is re-teaching us to believe He takes us where we would not choose to go in order to open our eyes and adjust our agenda on His mission. His plans are far better than ours. *Today, we are saddened at the prospect of not being here with you. Yet we are also excited by what lies ahead in this new mission field with Christ our Savior.*

“When you can say with entire truth and with a whole heart: ‘Lord God, lead me wherever Thou desires,’ then, only, do you deliver yourself from servitude and become really free.”

- Leo Tolstoy

Therefore, I am resigning as your lead pastor effective Sunday, March 26th 2023. Upon the recommendation of the elder board, I am also humbly requesting your partnership with my family and I by sending us out as a missionary family of Mayfair. **We love you, Mayfair Bible Church. You are our spiritual family.** We desire for Mayfair to be our church home and family for decades to come.

Every single one of the past 268 weeks as your pastor has been a sheer delight. We feel zero pressure from anyone to leave. In fact, quite the opposite. We have never been more loved by a church *and* we deeply love all of you. You are our family. Yet God’s call upon us into evangelism and discipleship in the field of the USAF is so clear. We must joyfully obey Christ and step out in faith.

Our desire before the Lord is to...

- ...continue as members of Mayfair as a missionary family to the military.
- ...contribute to the work of the Lord at Mayfair for the furtherance of God’s kingdom.
- ...return frequently for holidays, summer camp with our kids, mission conferences, etc.
- ...receive the support of prayer, encouragement, and accountability through you.

We praise God for what we’ve been able to be a part of by His grace:

- Receiving the gift of so many meaningful, deep relationships with you. You aren’t just “church members”. You are our friends, brothers, sisters, confidants, and family.
- Preaching the Word each and every Sunday; it has been an overwhelming joy and honor.

- Loving the flock of God through many baptisms (especially baptizing my daughter Everlynn and son Hudson!), weddings, funerals, hospital visits, and counseling meetings.
- Experiencing surprising doors open for relationships in the greater Flushing area with neighbors, business owners, other pastors, local government officials, and the chamber of commerce.
- Hosting “Church @ the Park” for 4 years in a row with great weather (wow!) and being invited to do so by the Flushing Chamber of Commerce (double wow!).
- Watching God grant us a beautiful, additional facility with the donation of the Thrive Center.
- Moving from being a loosely affiliated ‘sponsor church’ to a deeply involved *member church* of the Flushing Christian Outreach Center (FCOC) and seeing them move into our Thrive Center.
- Observing God direct us forward on His mission through leadership training weekends with people like Pastor Doug Schmidt, Pastor Nick Boring, Dallas Gatlin, and others.
- Seeing deeper relationships develop between Mayfair and other local para-church ministries such as: Genesee Christian School, Life Challenge-Flint, and Carriage Town Ministries.
- Going through the process of ministry evaluation and refreshed mission and vision statements with our leaders.
- Watching life-transformation happen at two Camp Barakel Men’s Retreats and also at a Father-Daughter Retreat.
- Experiencing the incredible blessing of traveling to India for a 2-week mission trip with Dan Neumann and Lois Montague.
- Rejoicing as God provided the launch of Celebrate Recovery and Griefshare to minister to a wider sector of our community.
- Seeing God faithfully lead us through the COVID pandemic with unity, peace, and even joy.
- Watching God grant us new opportunities for reaching our community with the message and mercy of Jesus, such as: the Friday Food Hub for 3 months as a part of the Sheriff’s Community Care Task Force, prayer gatherings with local officials, and more. You served with such enthusiasm!
- Praising the Lord for the opening of the Thrive Center and accompanying ministries such as: Connect with Coffee, Pilates and Praise, and a laundry ministry to families in need.
- Seeing God provide joyful, peaceful ministry transitions for Pastor Dean, Pastor Keegan, and Pastor Dale.
- Standing shocked and amazed by God giving us our beautiful baby son Jack, by adoption.
- Celebrating as God brought Pastor Steve Ford and Pastor Angel Garcia to us with their families.
- ...and many other reasons to praise Him!

Thank you for granting me the joy and privilege of serving as your lead pastor. We will never doubt God’s providence and grace in leading us to you *and* you to us. A bright future awaits Mayfair Bible Church as we march forward with bold reliance on God’s Word and humble dependence on God’s Spirit. To God be the glory for the great things He has done and will do!

Love in Christ,



NUTS AND BOLTS

THE MINISTRY OF AN AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN

The call involves training for and accepting a commission as an officer to serve as an active duty chaplain. An active duty USAF chaplain serves in three primary roles:

“A pastor to some and a chaplain to all.”

1. **Vitalizing and pastoring the church community on base.** This mission is in the vein of church-planting to cultivate a worshipping, serving community of like-minded faith and practice, to include weekly preaching, worship leading, kids and youth programs, Bible studies, relational evangelism, community outreach events). Many “base chapels” offer AWANA, youth groups, men’s and women’s Bible studies, VBS, fall festivals, and more. Worship services are usually small gatherings of 50-150. We would serve together as a family for many of these ministry activities.
2. **Offering confidential counseling to any airmen in need.** The door opens when good, Jesus-loving chaplains serve among the airmen and build relationships in their workplaces. Opportunities for relational evangelism abound in this setting.
3. **Providing leadership advice and professional counsel** to the commanding officers on matters of ethics, morality, integrity, and teamwork.

***Deployment overseas = 24/7 on-call missionary.** Based on the current tempo of operations, active duty Air Force chaplains deploy every 3-4 years for a period of 6 months +/-.

“So many churches are stuck in “come to” and have missed the “go to” mandate of ministry. We must be missionary, not stationary, people.”

– CJ Rhodes

A MISSIONARY FAMILY OF MAYFAIR TO THE MILITARY

- ***This is not a typical pastoral resignation, but rather a ministry transition*** for us to be sent out as a missionary family *of Mayfair* into the vast spiritual need of our nation’s military. I will no longer be your lead pastor, but a mission extension of Mayfair.
- ***We need and wholeheartedly desire a sending, supporting church.*** We cannot imagine our home base of support through prayer, encouragement, and accountability being any flock other than Mayfair Bible Church. You are our church, family, and home. Although we will not require

monthly financial support like other missionaries, we certainly need your spiritual and friendship support.

- ***We plan to remain members of Mayfair sent out as missionaries.*** We look forward to financially giving toward the ministry of Mayfair for years to come and can't wait to see that mortgage disappear this new year! Our prayerful desire is to keep our home in Flushing and affordably rent it to a local pastor or Christian family in need.
- ***We enthusiastically encourage all of you to stay in this family.*** In fact, we are! I urge you to stay and thrive in your membership to Mayfair. We're staying as members of Mayfair and will be very much a part of this family, even though we'll be a mission extension of you outside of this location. We envision ourselves returning for summer camp with our kids, holidays with our extended family, and future mission conferences.

MY TESTIMONY OF CALLING INTO THIS MISSION FIELD

The shocking thing to me is, “Why is God impressing this on our hearts when we’re serving in such a wonderful church as Mayfair?”

We deeply sense your love *and* we treasure you very much. We have so many reasons to praise the Lord. We, as a congregation, have weathered the past two and a half years of COVID with incredible unity, growth, and diligence in the gospel. I, frankly, have no personal desire or need to leave my role as lead pastor. And I know of no one here who would want us to leave. We are enjoying a season of renewal, fresh growth, and joy.

Yet we're unable to shake away from the Lord's direction to serve as missionary-pastor-chaplain in the Air Force. So, we've simply taken small, incremental steps forward and have been met with green lights at each juncture. Through much prayer, counsel, and conversation, **my wife and I have arrived at 3 key reasons why we believe God is calling me into the Air Force as an active-duty chaplain:**

1. **A Pull in My Heart.** While a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, some of my closest friends were veterans, some of whom were heading into chaplain ministry. We talked frequently and openly about serving as a chaplain during our morning runs, workouts, and small group Bible studies. They encouraged me to consider my interest in military chaplaincy.
 - a. **During that time, 14 years ago,** my wife and I discussed and prayed about Air Force chaplaincy – we specifically remember doing so during a Valentine's weekend getaway. I sensed a call to chaplaincy at that time. Yet after praying and discussing, the direction seemed unclear. I still had some time left in my seminary degree, as well. And, before I graduated, I was offered a full-time pastoral position back in Michigan. Yet the pull in my heart has not diminished but grown since then. 7 years ago, I again sensed a push in my heart to pursue USAF chaplaincy. I spoke with several friends who are active duty Army and Air Force chaplains and submitted some initial paperwork and transcripts to the recruiting office. Those I spoke with in the Air Force chaplaincy office were enthused and so were we. I received my ecclesiastical endorsement, etc. But just before I moved deeper into the process, several churches began actively and intensely seeking me as a lead/senior pastor. After much prayer and counsel, we decided that God was calling me back into local church ministry. Our calling led us to Mayfair Bible Church where I have served since that time. We are so deeply blessed, joyful, and fruitful in my current role.

- b. However, the desire to serve as a chaplain in the Air Force never left. In fact, over the past year the draw toward this ministry has grown stronger than ever. **Now over the past year**, everywhere I turn and during every morning run, I cannot escape a pull in my heart toward USAF ministry. My wife and I began seriously praying about it again and resolved upon the fact that God was calling us to step forward in faith.

2. **An Unshakable Awareness of the Need.** In each church I've served, I've worked closely with veterans – they often become some of my close friends. Some suffered injuries in combat, some manage war-related disabilities. All of them drive home the need for humble, heart-focused, hard-working chaplains who meet men and women where they're at. I believe ***discipleship happens through relationship***. This, I believe is what chaplaincy is about – a presence among airmen, an involvement in their lives, a genuine care for their concerns, a visible reminder of the Holy – God, our Creator, who cares for us and loves us. Again, seeing the airmen and soldiers serving in the recent Afghanistan exit and the Ukraine-Russia war has flooded my mind with the reality of what they were facing and what they have to process. They need counsel, a listening ear, someone to weep with them, comfort them, and pray with them. The spiritual needs are vast. God has placed this weight on my soul for the men and women of the USAF.

3. **A Unique Background and Skillset.**

- a. My inter-denominational family: My family comes from a variety of backgrounds, which are most evident at our Thanksgiving dinner table. You see, both of my parents were raised devout Catholic, later becoming evangelical in their faith. My grandparents, much later in life, became ordained Episcopalian priests, one uncle is a United Methodist pastor, and the other uncle is Independent Baptist, with my immediate family being non-denominational conservative evangelical. Yet we all confess and love Christ. So, we'll smile and say, "who is going to say the prayer for the Thanksgiving meal?" And we all sing the doxology together. Now this doesn't mean we each do not have our personal convictions, our genuine sincere beliefs, some of which differ from each other. Yet I've **learned conviction with compassion**. This is the model of Christ. I see how this unique upbringing prepares me to be "a chaplain to all and a pastor to some" and also for the joy of compassionately working alongside chaplains from other faith traditions, while at the same time serving with my own conviction about the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- b. God has provided me with great teachers and mentors who've equipped me with skills to preach, teach, lead music, launch new programs, and more. My wife and I enjoy new changes, new places, new faces, and like launching new ways to love and help people. We see how the needs and pace of Air Force life fits within how we're wired in the "sweet-spot" of our ministry. My wife and children are naturally congenial, musical, and make new friends easily. We carry the gift of hospitality everywhere we go.
- c. I'm also thankful for the good health and athletic passion God has placed within me. I love to run, hike, mountain bike, rock-climb, and even though I'm 39, I can still keep up with the 18-year-olds on the ice hockey rink. ☺ I hope that my passion for athletics will allow me the opportunity to meet airmen where they are at during morning PT and other physically rigorous events.

I would count it a great honor and privilege to serve God and our nation together with the Air Force Chaplain Corps.

THE PROCESS

(a summary timeline of past, present, future)

1. Receive “ecclesiastical endorsement” from a DoD approved denomination or agency; similar to approval from a mission agency. God blessed me with ordination in the GARBC (General Association of Regular Baptist Churches) and strong relationships in that network of like-minded brothers and sisters. The director of their chaplaincy endorsing arm (also affiliated with ABWE) is Pastor Manning Brown, a retired Lt. Colonel in the Air Force. He resides in Grand Blanc and also serves at Emmanuel Church – NE Flint and Grand Blanc campuses. (Jan. 2022)
2. Begin conversation and initial vetting with the USAF chaplain corps (must have a MDiv degree or equivalent, ordination, and years of full-time experience). (Oct. 2021-Feb. 2022)
3. Launch full application if approved to proceed. (Jan-March 2022)
4. Complete a physical, background check, etc. at MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station) and full application with the USAF. (April 2022)
5. If approved to proceed, submit further paperwork and video presentation to the USAF chaplain corps. (March-April 2022)
6. If chosen, stand before the Accessions Board (commission board of the USAF chaplain corps) for a detailed interview. (May, 2022)
7. If selected, the candidate will receive an official letter of selection for commissioning as an officer – chaplain. The role granted is only for that of a chaplain. This is a specialized non-combatant commissioned officer position that is under the dual authority of the church endorsing agency and the USAF. (June, 2022)
8. Be duly sworn in as an officer of the USAF. (Sunday March 12, 2023; done with Lt. Col. (retired) Pastor Manning Brown)
9. Attend and graduate from Officer Training School (OTS – 8 weeks): March 28-May 26.
10. Move to our first place of ministry – duty station (June 2023)

WAITING AND PRAYING

All throughout this process, God has been teaching us to patiently wait and pray. In May of 2021, we first began to sense the Spirit’s gentle nudge in this direction and starting praying about the possibilities. In September of 2021, we began taking small steps in conversation with the Air Force. In February of 2022, we started taking bigger steps forward. In June of 2022, I was officially selected for commissioning as an officer to serve as an active duty chaplain. In July 2022, this was formalized. Now in January 2023, over a year later, we are again waiting 3 months until I head off for the 8-week officer training school (starts March 28th) and 5 months until we, as a family, will move to our first duty station (June). We will not know that specific location until February. **In light of this, we humbly ask that you wait and pray with us.** In the meantime, we desire to throw 110% of our energy, creativity, and love into Mayfair.



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

The following Air Force/Space Force active duty demographics information is current as of 30 September 2022. These statistics are from the current inventory and does not include the Guard, Reserve or Air Force Academy (approx. 4,000 cadets).

Snapshot of the Air Force & Space Force

328,517 Active Duty

82,308 Reserve

Breakdown of Active-Duty Members:

263,576 Enlisted

64,941 Officers

There are 12,279 pilots, 3,313 navigators and 1,365 air battle managers in the grade of lieutenant colonel and below.

There are 26,806 nonrated line officers in the grade of lieutenant colonel and below.

Age 35 average age of the officer force

29 average age for enlisted force

37% are below the age of 26

43% of enlisted are below 26

14% of officers are below 26

FAQ

Adapted from <https://leadwiththeleft.com/frequently-asked-questions-on-military-chaplaincy/>

Are Chaplains' rights being restricted?

"Usually when people ask this, they're assuming that a chaplain can't preach the tenets of his or her religion with freedom and/or has to conduct the religious services for other religions. This is not the case. I can preach the Bible in my service with no problems. I can lead a Bible study to teach what is consistent with my faith group. I can pray in Jesus' name in any of these settings plus any settings where people are attending voluntarily. I just have to be tactful when I am speaking in front of an audience at mandatory-attendance events. Really, I personally just adhere to rules of good public speaking: do not betray the trust of the person that invited you to speak by speaking about something unexpected, consider your audience, and keep the Chaplain Corps mission of protecting EVERY Airman's right to free practice of religion.

"Every Airman is free to practice the religion of their choice or subscribe to no religious belief at all. You should confidently practice your own beliefs while respecting others whose viewpoints differ from your own. Every Airman also has the right to individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs, to include conscience, moral principles or religious beliefs, unless those expressions would have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, health and safety, or mission accomplishment."

– Air Force Instruction 1-1, 2.11

Do you have to do things you don't believe in to be a chaplain?

As an Air Force chaplain, I exist in the military for one reason: to protect EVERY Airman's constitutional right to freely exercise his or her religious beliefs. Chaplains are commissioned officers primarily to have the power and authority necessary to protect the rights of Airmen and their families. A little-known fact is that the Chapel program is actually the Commander's responsibility. Chaplains are simply the subject matter experts that run the commander's program. This ensures that the program gets done and is prioritized high enough to be done well. Chaplain care meets the needs of ALL Airmen on one of three levels:

1) Provide

I serve all Airmen in some capacity even if they are not from my faith group; I just serve them differently. I am a Protestant Christian. This means that I "provide" what the Protestant community needs. I can preach in chapel, teach a small group on Christian theology, provide confidential pastoral counseling, run a retreat, baptize new believers or anything pertaining to the Protestant Christian community.

2) Provide for

The second level is for those airmen with religious beliefs that differ from mine and may need some help from another kind of clergy. I will never be forced to do something I do not believe in or that conflict with my faith or endorsing body's standards, but if someone in the community needs someone to do one of these things, it's up to me to find someone (another chaplain or a civilian) who can do these things for them. I do not personally do anything for the Airman, but I find someone who can to support that person's right to free practice.

"The Air Force Chaplain Corps provides spiritual care and ensures all Airmen and their families have opportunities to exercise their constitutional right to the free exercise of religion."

-Air Force Policy Directive 52-1, 3.1

3) Facilitate

The third level is “facilitating.” Facilitating occurs when another clergy member is not necessary so I provide space and material. I would not personally participate in the service or ceremony, but I would make sure the Airmen have everything they need. One Christian chaplain I met gave me a good example of this when he was at a training base: he got a request from an Airman that practiced Wicca. The Airman was in field training during the summer solstice, which is a major Wiccan holiday. The Airman told the chaplain what they needed and what kind of space they needed for their ceremony, and the chaplain procured space and made sure they had the supplies they needed to practice their faith.

I can already hear the objection many of you have as I type: “You’re in the military! If a superior gave you an order to do something that would cause you to violate your faith, you would have to do it, right?!”

WRONG! Here is why: Every chaplain is an officer that is sworn to protect and defend the constitution of the United States, but that commission is contingent on our good standing with our endorser. Endorsers are essentially representatives of different faith traditions that are recognized by the Department of Defense. They tell the Chaplain Corps that a chaplain teaches what they believe and they approve of them. This means that if I start doing things that they don’t approve of, they can pull my endorsement and, suddenly, I am no longer a chaplain nor an officer. Because endorsers have that power, I can tell a superior officer that my endorser will not allow me to do that thing that would violate my faith, and then they can request a letter to verify that my endorser in fact does not approve.

“When you’re coming into your worship services, I need you to be authentic to who you came from. You need to preach and teach the word as you were raised to do, as your endorsers want you to do, as the community needs you to do. And do it in such a way that is loving and respectful... If you’re a Lutheran, be a Lutheran. If you’re Baptist, be Baptist. If you’re Roman Catholic—if the Pope walked in, he better say, ‘That’s exactly who I wanted.’ ...We need to be authentic for our folks so they can practice their faith and grow and be strong on this military journey.”

– Chaplain (Brigadier General) Ronald M. Harvell, Air Force Deputy Chief of Chaplains, Basic Chaplain Course Graduation, 25 June 2019

Sources/Further Reading:

Recruiting sites: [Air Force](#) | [Army](#) | [Navy](#)

[Air Force Policy Directive 52-1](#) – Chaplain Corps

[Air Force Instruction 1-1, 2.11](#) – Free Exercise of Religion and Religious Accommodation, 2.12 – Balance of Free Exercise of Religion and Establishment Clause

[Air Force Instruction 36-2706](#) – Equal Opportunity Program, Military and Civilian

[The Chaplain Kit](#) – military chaplaincy history