Family and friends, Patricia, Nina and Thomas, and all five of Sam’s beloved grandchildren,

we gather at this quiet place to commend to God the life of Samuel Dean Carter—Sam—born November 10, 1942, now at rest at the age of 83.

For twelve years I have known this family as their pastor. I have watched Sam’s faith carry him through milestones and, most recently, through illness with a steadiness that never asked for notice and never lost its kindness.

Sam served his country as a young Army veteran in the Korean War era. He served his city for decades as a mail carrier in Richmond, walking routes in all weathers so faithfully that neighbors set their clocks by him. And he served this church as an elder, week after week, with the calm good sense of a peacemaker and the gentle humor that could ease a tight room without a single sharp word.

My enduring memory of him is simple and, I think, true to who he was: standing by the church doors on Sunday mornings, greeting every person by name, saving his largest smile for the children. That was Sam—present, attentive, and warm, the first to welcome and the last to leave.

He was devout in the quiet ways that shape a life. A Baptist through and through, he read Scripture daily, believed in grace without spectacle, and trusted the hope of resurrection not as a theory but as a promise. He stocked our church food pantry every Thursday, no fanfare, just sleeves rolled up and prayers whispered as he set the cans straight.

Beyond his service, there were the small joys that made him distinctive: the care he gave his roses, the clack of dominoes with neighbors on a summer evening, the low, contented notes of a harmonica at dusk from the porch he

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shared with Patricia, his wife of 60 years. Those sounds and sights are part of the neighborhood’s memory now.

We will miss his steady presence at the doors, the prayers he offered before anyone asked, and the counsel he delivered with kindness and clarity. We give thanks for a husband, a father to Nina and Thomas, a grandfather whose lap and laughter were always available, and a friend whose word could be trusted.

At the graveside we feel the nearness of loss. Yet Sam taught us, by practice, to place our sorrow inside the larger story of God’s mercy. The One who received his daily prayers now receives Sam himself. The seeds he planted—in Patricia’s faithful heart, in his children and grandchildren, in this church and community—do not perish. They rise in the lives we lead.

In honor of Sam’s heart for quiet service, the family asks that memorials be made to the church food pantry he stocked each Thursday. It would please him to know that neighbors continue to find their daily bread.

May the God of all comfort keep Patricia, Nina, Thomas, and these grandchildren in peace; may the memory of Sam’s steadfast love steady our steps; and may the hope he cherished carry us until the day when faith becomes sight. Amen.

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