

# MLB Legend Darryl Strawberry to Keynote 44th Annual Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast

*Former All-Star shares powerful story of redemption, faith, and hope*

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

Darryl Strawberry, the MLB legend whose journey through personal struggle, addiction, and ultimately faith has inspired millions, will serve as the keynote speaker at the 44th annual Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast. The theme of this year's event is "Out of the Dugout, Into the Light."

The breakfast will be held from 7:25 to 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5, at Kellogg Arena, One McCamly Square in downtown Battle Creek. Tickets are \$20 each and may be purchased through the Community Prayer Breakfast website at [www.bcprayerbreakfast.org](http://www.bcprayerbreakfast.org) or at the Battle Creek Community Foundation, 32 W. Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek. Sign language interpreters will be available.

## Event at a Glance

**What:** 44th Annual Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast

**Theme:** "Out of the Dugout, Into the Light"

**When:** Tuesday, May 5 — 7:25 to 9:00 a.m.

**Where:** Kellogg Arena, One McCamly Square, Battle Creek, MI

**Tickets:** \$20 — available at [www.bcprayerbreakfast.org](http://www.bcprayerbreakfast.org) or the Battle Creek Community Foundation

## A 44-Year Tradition of Shared Faith

Modeled after the National Prayer Breakfast, the Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast draws more than 1,000 participants each year as an expression of shared faith and purpose in God. Thanks to generous community donors, several hundred area high school students from various schools in Calhoun County attend at no cost.

Through music, prayers, Scripture readings, and inspirational speakers, the Prayer Breakfast seeks to bring light and hope to all who gather. The event is organized and carried out by dozens of community volunteers.

The tradition began in 1982, founded by Dr. Russell Mawby, Dr. Paul Gieser, and Colonel Ben Gomez, who expanded the Federal Center's employee prayer breakfast to include the greater Battle Creek community.

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## Keynote Speaker: Darryl Strawberry

This year's keynote speaker, Darryl Strawberry, grew up in a difficult home environment and found refuge in baseball. He went on to become an MLB superstar, hitting 335 home runs over his 17-year career with the New York Mets and New York Yankees. An eight-time All-Star with four World Series championships, Strawberry became a fan favorite for his talent and charisma.

Yet behind the success, he battled addiction and personal turmoil. His search for healing ultimately led him to faith.

"Darryl Strawberry's story is one of the most powerful redemption stories you'll ever hear. This is a story of a man who had fame and success, lost nearly everything, and found a new life through faith in Christ."

— Ryan Leonard, event co-chair

Strawberry has shared his journey through several books, including *Another Life, Turn Your Season Around*, and *Straw: Finding My Way*.

Beyond writing and speaking, Strawberry is dedicated to helping others. Together with his wife, Tracy, he leads the Darryl Strawberry Foundation, which provides education, resources, and counseling for individuals seeking support with mental health and addiction challenges.

"I love that Mr. Strawberry's story goes beyond the classic 'rags to riches' plot and reaches the heart of the matter. Wealth and fame do not satisfy, but leaning into faith brings freedom. This is the encouragement Calhoun County — and my own heart — needs to hear in 2026."

— Esther Leonard, event co-chair

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## "This I Believe" Speaker: Raul Maysonet

Raul Maysonet, a youth mentor engaged in community outreach through Hood Church and The Hope House Aftercare, will share his inspirational testimony as the "This I Believe" speaker.

"Prayer is the very lifeline that has carried me through the hardest moments of my life."

— Raul Maysonet

Maysonet's story includes a difficult childhood and devastating personal loss, which spiraled him into mental illness, depression, and addiction — until, as he describes it, God gave him a new life and new hope.

"Raul has found healing, purpose, and identity through his faith. He doesn't just talk about belief, he's lived it, and his story brings real hope to our community."

— Ryan Leonard, event co-chair

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## Program Participants

The Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast continues its tradition of inviting local participants to be part of the program. This year's participants include:

- **Prelude music** — Worship team from Victory Life Church
  - **Old Testament reading** — Robin Boltz
  - **New Testament reading** — Dominic and Olivia Oo
  - **Prayer for fellowship and unity** — Doug Haywood
  - **Prayer for Community** — Lori Haywood-Mains
  - **Closing prayer** — Asia Graham
  - **Amazing Grace (closing)** — Walter Williams
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## Tickets, Donations, and Contact

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online at [www.bcprayerbreakfast.org](http://www.bcprayerbreakfast.org) or in person at the Battle Creek Community Foundation, 32 W. Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek.

Tax-deductible donations to the Battle Creek Community Prayer Breakfast are gratefully accepted. Contributions allow students to attend at no cost and help keep the event affordable for the community. Donations may be made online at [www.bcprayerbreakfast.org](http://www.bcprayerbreakfast.org) or at the Battle Creek Community Foundation.

Those who give \$100 or more will receive an invitation for two to the **Meet and Greet Reception with Darryl Strawberry** on Monday evening, May 4, at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

### Contact Information

**Email:** [prayerbreakfast@bccfoundation.org](mailto:prayerbreakfast@bccfoundation.org)

**Phone:** (269) 962-2181 (Battle Creek Community Foundation)

**Website:** [www.bcprayerbreakfast.org](http://www.bcprayerbreakfast.org)