

THE BLESSING BULLETIN

May 28, 2026

DID YOU KNOW?

The Blessing is located just miles away from a large Air Force installation. Eglin Air Force Base covers 724 square miles. A large portion is home to a forest filled with native wildlife. It isn't unusual to see videos of black bears roaming the area. In fact, last summer, video surfaced of a black bear taking a dip in the Gulf. The eastern portion of nearby Okaloosa Island is also property of Eglin Air Force Base.

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The logo for Avant Ministries, featuring the word "Avant" in a stylized, red, cursive font.

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REFLECTING ON OUR FIRST YEAR

How often have you found that reality is quite different from the picture in your mind? This month, I am celebrating one year since The Blessing officially opened its doors. It has been an interesting year as I continue to transition not only to a new location but a new kind of ministry.

Life in the hills and mountains of WV impacted the first 25 years of my life. Throw in 24 years spent living and working in France, you can easily see why Florida is a completely different kettle of fish. If you add to that the fact that I live in an area largely populated by people coming from other places, you can imagine the challenges that I encounter daily. The Blessing guests introduce additional cultures and experiences to the mix.

Obviously, due to the nature of my work, I can't share details. However, I have welcomed individuals so burned out that they are searching for words to communicate. I have listened to young women share their experiences of sexual abuse, often during childhood. One guest had so many traumatic things happen to her that I couldn't help but think that her story was a modern-day version of Job.

I expected burnout, difficult relationships, and conflict with co-workers. I didn't expect the level of trauma, often not addressed or dealt with, that I hear on a regular basis during a debrief. I couldn't have imagined how important the training that I received would be in this new ministry.

One thing that hasn't been unexpected is God's faithfulness. Though the house and surrounding area aren't perfect, He has made it clear that this is the location. Guests consistently rave about the beauty of the emerald waters and the calmness that comes from being so near God's creation. Looking back at my life experiences and training received over the years, I can see how He prepared imperfect me to be His safe representative as guests unpack their stories.

I am excited as I embark on another year at The Blessing! Thank you for faithfully walking with me. You make it possible for me to point weary and burdened people to the ONE who gives true rest and peace. THANK YOU!!