

Harmony Ministries USA, Inc.

"The Word Made Alive"



*Merry
Christmas*

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News Magazine

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Dear Readers,

*The Christmas season is a reminder to believers to keep Christ first in everything that we do, and to spread the gospel of salvation to everyone we come in contact with. In this holiday issue our articles, “*First Things First*,” “*Limitless*”, “*Lifestyle Worship*”, “*Peace in the Christmas Season*”, and “*Practical Steps for Christians to Move from Defeat Into Victory*”, will hopefully encourage you, challenge you, and guide you in keeping Christ on the throne of your heart.*

Warmly wishing you a very Blessed Christmas!

CINDY T. BROWN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

FIRST THINGS FIRST

***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you.
(Matthew 6:33)***

It's imperative that we as believers understand the necessity in putting the word of God first in our lives. We live in a natural world that seems to demand that we do things that make sense, but I want to let you know that faith does not make sense to the natural mind, for in first Corinthians 2:14 the Bible says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When Jesus says, "seek first the kingdom of God", then you must consider exactly what He says. Faith begins where the will of God is known. We must not consider what makes sense, but only what the word of God is saying.

In understanding the concept of "seeking first the kingdom", know that God wants us to first consider His word, not what we think. As we meditate on the word of God and make it a priority then revelation will come. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Only when revelation comes will we be able to ignore circumstances and do what the word of God says.



Pastor Owen L. Alston

In my vast experience with people, many are operating in the natural trying to establish themselves; however, God did not instruct us to establish ourselves but to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED TO YOU". God wants us to believe His word and act on His word by doing what it says. God not only will establish you but He will make the devil back off while He does it (read II Thessalonians 3:3).

James in his writings provides an amazing revelation along these lines, "But be doers of

the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25). The key to being a doer of the word is revealed in this text: you must faithfully CONTINUE in it. Make hearing the word of God a way of life for you. Proverbs chapter 4 verses 21-22, "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."

Allow me if you will to share a bit of my own testimony. When I was called into public

ministry, it was my heart's desire to do the will of God. I had no ulterior motives. I did not know that faithfulness would be rewarded here on earth the way that it has been. I just simply gave myself constantly to the word of God and prayer, doing whatever good thing my hands found to do. As a result, God has added many things to me. I am a living witness that when you put first things first, that all these things will be added. I remind people from time to time about the pitfall of making THINGS their priority. Get it right; SEEK FIRST JESUS. When we get our priorities right all else will work fine. Psalm 37:3-5 "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."



Member Spotlight

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Harold LaMarr, Sr. was born in Florida where at age six, he was baptized in the lake, but he grew up in New Jersey. When he was nine years old, he moved to Newark where he attended school. He later attended cake decorating school in Detroit with the goal of becoming a baker's assistant. When that didn't work out, he attended Essex County Technical School and trained in the repair of air conditioners, refrigerators, televisions, and other electronics. He spent the next thirty years in the retail business. Initially, he owned a furniture store which he sold to establish LaMarr's Appliance Center in Newark. "I've always been business minded. I remember once I had a vision of myself in business. I looked out the window and saw a van with my name on it." That vision became a reality in 1963 as a Volkswagen van with LaMarr's Appliance on the side. In 1971, he established H. LaMarr Service, Incorporated in Plainfield, New Jersey, which was in business for twenty-two years.

At a party, he met Gloria Burks who later became his wife and business partner. "Gloria did the books and did the selling. I made the service calls. People claimed we would never survive in business together but we did and were very successful." A son was born to the couple, followed by three daughters. Harold recalls, "We had an excellent family life. Our home in Plainfield was the gathering place for all the cookouts and holidays." On April 3, Harold and Gloria will celebrate 61 years of marriage. They presently have three grandchildren and three great grandchildren with another one on the way.

When thinking about retirement, Harold began looking in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware for a house. His daughter gave him some information on Crestwood Village in Whiting, New Jersey. "When we saw the house, we knew it was just what we were looking for." They moved in 2004. Harold began attending the Wednesday morning Bible Study at Harmony while attending another church. He came out to support a car wash to raise funds for the Harmony youth and met Darryl Lee who invited him to a Men's Fellowship meeting. It wasn't long before he and Gloria became regulars at Sunday service and joined Harmony Ministries. When asked why he keeps coming to Harmony, Harold responded, "Because I'm a member. My main concern is my spiritual life. I appreciate the teaching ministry and I love the people."

Although he grew up in the church, it wasn't until later that Harold began an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. He remembers sitting in a hotel room and realizing that his life had to change. He was asking himself, where do I go from here? He found a Gideon Bible in the room and began to flip through it. "For



every question I had, my hand would find a verse that answered it. That morning I met Jesus for myself and I knew He was real. When I got saved, I was in my mid-thirties, married with a family. After my experience with the Lord, I felt I was the same physically, mentally, and emotionally, but everything about me was enhanced. I was a better man, a better husband, a better father, a better brother. Other people recognized the change in me. Jesus made me better at what I am and He is still doing it." A few weeks later when a man spoke about the Gideons at his church, Harold, wanting to know more about the group, gave him his contact information. "This led to my being invited to their Christmas party and giving my testimony about what their ministry had done for me."

Harold has always been a people person. "I love people, I love being around people, I love helping people." He demonstrates this love by driving for Somebody Cares, a volunteer organization of Crestwood Village in Whiting. "We drive seniors to doctor's appointments or take them shopping. We even have a handicap van so we can help seniors in wheelchairs." At 6 a.m., Monday through Friday, Harold LaMarr can found on his knees at Harmony Ministries' morning prayer. He is also a regular at Wednesday morning Bible Study and the monthly Men's Fellowship meeting. On Sunday morning, he will greet you with a smile and a hug as he serves as an usher at Harmony Ministries. One of Harold LaMarr's favorite Bible verses is Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" When asked why that verse has particular significance, Harold replied, "That verse identifies me." Harold LaMarr, Senior: a businessman, a family man, a people person, a man of God.



A Word of Encouragement

By Brittany Lee

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 2 Timothy 4:2

We have heard many times how difficult it is to be young and Christian at the same time. We often speak of the hardships of standing firm in our faith, while the waves of our peers and the winds of the present culture are consistent in their endeavor to push us in the complete opposite direction. It is the constant warfare of flesh and spirit. How often are we allowing our flesh to win? That question is not solely in reference to having a godly lifestyle and doing what is considered right in God's sight. It is a question of how often we treat living for God and doing right in His sight as a burden because in that very sentiment, we begin to lose.

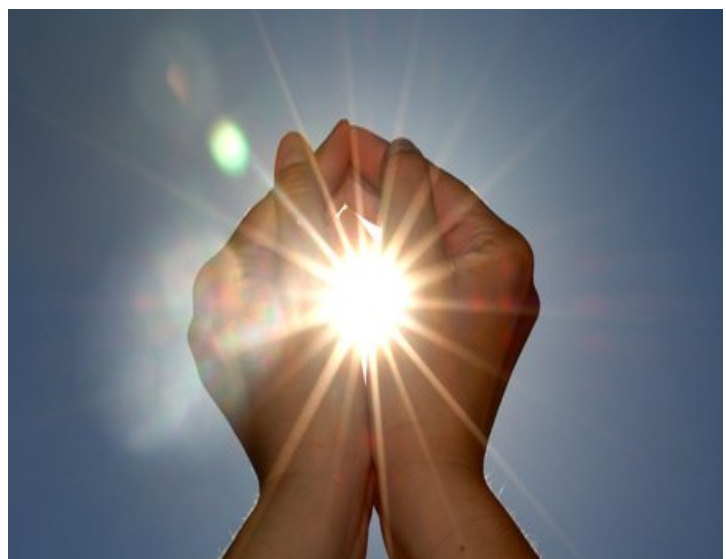
The Bible declares in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. This commonly quoted scripture is often equated to paying our tithes and giving monetary offerings, but let us equate it to our lives. As children of God, if we have given our lives to Him, let us be cheerful in doing so, not with hesitation and pressure as stated in verse seven of 2 Corinthians 9.

When it comes to sharing Christ with others, a Christian confidence must be developed. The people around should be able to sense your joy and pride in Christ and be inclined to want to identify with the light that is shining through you. Romans 8:30 says, "Those whom God decided would be conformed to His son, He also called. Those whom He has called, He also made righteous. Those whom He made righteous, He also glorified." So what are we going to say about these things? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" This passage of scripture attests to the awesomeness of being called by God. Sure, the pressures of the world

come against us at times, but let us always remember what we have in Christ versus what the world offers. "There's a way that seems right to a man," says Proverbs 14:12, "...but in the end it leads to death."

Showcase the goodness of God to your peers and everyone around you. Be cheerful in serving God. Let your light shine, illuminating the path that leads to life. It is a blessing to be called by God. It is powerful to be unashamed about it. In order to gain Christian confidence and willingness to share the Gospel, read God's word. Learn what God says about you and learn God's gracious character until it becomes so instilled in your heart that it comes out naturally, no matter where you are or who you are around.

Scriptures to references include: Matthew 10:28, Psalm 118:6, Hebrews 13:6, Jeremiah 1:8, Ecclesiastes 8:15, Colossians 3:17, Ephesians 5:8-11, Colossians 1:10





By Deborah Peniston

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Thessalonians 5:16-18

Just want to praise You, forever and ever for all You’ve done for me. Blessing and glory and honor, they all belong to You. Thank you Jesus for blessing me! Let the words and melody of this song resonate through your mind and heart. This is one of my favorite praise and worship songs and there are many, but worship has more to do with the heart of the believer than the singing or even the songs we sing.

Psalm 100:1-3 NKJ tells us, *“Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”* The Hebrew translation of singing in this text refers back to joyful shout in verse 1, and it means to emit a strident sound, or make a shrill creaking sound. In this text, it is a shout or a cry out in joy; it is a joyful voice, singing or triumphing. It is not limited to musical singing. This scripture suggests we have cause to shout joyfully in whatever oral expression because of who God is. This idea is supported in the entire passage, Psalm 100:1-5 NKJ, as it gives the believer reasons to praise the Lord: He is God. He made us. We are His people.

Psalm 100:5 goes on to say, *For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.”* Therefore, verse 4 says we should *“enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.* This joyful shout or singing is the result of the fullness of God in our lives. Too often, the emphasis of praise and worship is on this outward public expression. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and we are fully persuaded that the word of God is truth, we make a melody in our hearts, honoring God daily even when there is no music or crowd.

John 4:23, 24 NKJ tells us, *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.* The Greek translation for worship in this passage of scripture is to fawn or crouch; to prostrate oneself in homage or reverence. Fawn means to seek favor by servile flattery or exaggerated attention. The inference here is the state of mind and/or heart of the worshiper. It says nothing about singing or shouting, and the scripture says the *“Father*

is seeking such to worship Him.”

Colossians 3:16 tells us to *admonish one another in songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord* and while I personally love to sing songs of praise and worship to the Lord, this passage of scripture implies more than what we see during a church service. In fact, while the Greek translation for singing in this text does mean to sing, a closer look at the text in its entirety infers that this should be a way of life for the believer. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and*

leave that physical place, you will have an attitude of praise and worship all the time. Philippians 4:8 NKJ tells us to meditate on *whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy...;* we are to think deeply and deliberately about these things. We also know that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 4:23). Such a believer is thankful and grateful and is one for whom worship is a choice, not just in song on Sunday, but in word and



hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:16, 17.

During the worship service, the worshiper has learned to focus solely on the Lord. Worshipers discipline their minds and do not allow the enemy to keep them from worship. Having entered that place of worship fosters an unquenchable desire to stay there. It is there that you find peace and joy. It is there that the truth of God's word becomes real to you. Praise and worship changes your attitude because it keeps your mind and thoughts on God. So, even though you may

deed. This believer desires to please God by continually offering the sacrifice of praise, that is the fruit of his or her lips, giving thanks, and doing good so God will be well pleased (Hebrews 13:15).

Such an attitude of praise and worship keeps the mind disciplined and does not allow the enemy to get the believer off track. That old song says, *when the praises go up, the blessings come down.* I Thessalonians 5:15-18 NKJ tells us, *See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*



Tranquility of Heart

by Marilyn Phillips

*Proverbs 14:30 (ESV) A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh,
but envy makes the bones rot.*

The human heart is an incredibly powerful and vital organ which works constantly without ever pausing to rest, and therefore, it is essential that we alleviate additional stress on our ever working cardiac muscles.

Adhering to some basic rules such as eating a healthy diet, regular exercise, and getting adequate rest can help to ensure the ability of cardiac muscles to function at their utmost capacity.

How much you eat is just as important as what you eat, and controlling portion size is essential. Vegetables and fruits are wise food choices because they contain substances found in plants that may help to prevent cardiovascular disease and also help you to eat less high-fat foods, such as meat, cheese and snack foods. Likewise, limiting the quantity of unhealthy fats you eat, such as saturated and trans fats, as well as including whole grains in your diet, are also vital steps to reduce your blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease. I would encourage everyone to make a habit of reading food labels to help you discern what you are eating.

Regular exercise helps to control and maintain our weight at healthy levels, and is critically important to strengthening our hearts.

While these factors help to avoid additional stress of our ever working heart muscles, it is without question that peace in of mind is one of the major components in maintaining a healthy and tranquil heart.

Having a tranquil heart is achieved as we place our trust totally in God. The Lord knows that when we allow him to be our Shepherd we can have peace. We can elevate our minds above the cares and concerns of daily life and steal away in His peace. The Bible declares, “the LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the pres-

ence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (PSALM 23 1-5). How comforting to know that our Father, the all-knowing and loving God is leading us. Yes, even in the valleys He is there, guiding, providing, and protecting. When the road gets rocky and risky our Shepherd is still leading the way. He knows where the peaceful streams lie that will restore us. When we allow our Shepherd to guide the way, we will have contentment and tranquility of heart.

The Word states, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (JOHN 1:12). As Christians, we hold the very privileged position of being children of God. Through faith in Christ, this new life affords us the ability to rearrange our desires, motives, and attitudes according to the guidance of our Father. We are members of God’s family. In His family, there is peace and joy. The Word says, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). In this kingdom is great peace (PSALM 119:165). Modern society longs for this peace of mind. God clearly states in his Word the well- defined instructions for obtaining this peace. Loving and obeying his laws is the key to the door that leads to the tranquility of mind. Not only would we have peace, but God who cannot lie declares our peace will be great. God comprehends and gives us assurance that only when we fully rely on him can we sail above the pressures of our daily lives like an eagle. Jesus also declares, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (MATTHEW 11: 28 -29). Our Father longs for us to trust him. He encourages us to come clos-

er to His arm and rest in him. He said, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glories rejoice. My flesh will rest in hope" (PSALM 16: 8-9).

He is the Prince of Peace; Jesus frees us from whatever the burden we are carrying that may be weighing us down, and creating a heavy yoke on our hearts. Our relationship with God will transform meaningless worry into spiritual purpose and productivity. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (LUKE 10:41-42). Mary chose to focus on what brought her peace which was sitting in God's presence. Tranquility of heart and mind will always be achieved successfully in the presence of God as we steal away and liberate ourselves from the pressures of this busy world.

Maintaining a positive and joyful spirit adds enjoyment to those around us and thereby, adds more enjoyment to our own lives. As we sow peace and tranquility around us, we reap peace and tranquility. "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body" (PROVERBS 16:24). His word also says, "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (PROVERBS 17:22). Let's focus on the things that we love and not the things that bring turmoil and constant unrest to our minds and hearts. Let's purposely seek the positive in others instead of the negative. Our Father who is our great example is always focusing on our positives. He sees us much greater than we see ourselves, and cheers us on to our destiny. Our hearts finds rest and peace as we engage in this positive outlook and never lose hope. Our Father declares there is nothing impossi-

ble for Him. He is a God of possibilities rather than impossibilities. Rest assured that at the end of the journey there will be a positive outcome. God's word states, "but for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall" (MALACHI 4:2). "Let's continue to utilize God's word, His wisdom and discretion. This will keep us happy and healthy as we obtain rest and tranquility of heart in Him.

Some Practical Tips on Maintaining a Tranquil Heart

Love and happiness always increase when they are shared.

Slow down. Life can be fast and furious, but don't allow it to be so all the time. Find rest in His presence.

Be ready to cope with change and unpredictability. We have God's innumerable angels around us to provide protection for us.

We have to build into our thinking that circumstances are not personal, and you have not been singled out. Whether it's missing the train, being let down by a friend, or loss of a loved one, there are many who have gone before us with the same struggles and won.

We can change and create our world by our words. This world was created by words. Life and death lie in our tongues.

We need to accept and tolerate situations that cannot be changed, such as the death of a friend. If we can cultivate an attitude of acceptance and detachment, we can move on.

Get engaged in life in a meaningful way. You have to intentionally take the time to enjoy people around you and our beautiful world.

Have a blessed and Christ focused Christmas!



"A joyful heart is good medicine..."

HARMONY MINISTRIES' REFLECTIONS OF 2016

by Yvonne Shaw

This Christmas season, as we focus our attention on the birth of Jesus Christ, let's remember that the greatest gift anyone can receive is free, and that is the gift of accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

As this year comes to a close, our church wants to share some of the highlights of 2016 that we had the privilege to experience at Harmony Ministries USA. Some of the events were held at Harmony Ministries and other events we participated in outside of our facilities. What a wonderful experience it was to participate in events where God's people were eager to truly worship and glorify Jesus in unity. Romans 12:5 expounds on how the children of God are to live united as one in Christ with no separations, only unity.



“B.A.B.E.S. in Christ stands for Brilliant, Ambitious, Beautiful, Effervescent, Servants. It’s a young adult ministry that is held at Harmony Ministries on every other Monday. We are dedicated to “keeping God’s young people near the cross”, which is our slogan. Meeting topics are wide-ranging and most pertinent to people between 18 to 30ish, although everyone is welcome to join us. People enjoy fellowshiping with us because the topics are good, the camaraderie is good, and it’s a learning experience for all. The Holy Spirit is always in control and that really makes for a great group and a great time in love! □- Amber Brown



PURITY CEREMONY by Samkelisiwe Dennis and Danielle Lloyd February 13, 2016

“The Purity Program was designed to help Christian Youth understand their sexuality in light of the gospel in maintaining and keeping their vows. The Purity Ceremony was held on February 13th, 2016 at which time each participant, after committing to keeping their vows, were given purity rings

to boldly show their outward symbol committing to God's Word until they are married. This is an ongoing program that meet every first Saturday of the month from 1 PM to 3 PM. The foundation of the Program is based on the Word of God "Flee sexual immorality." The Purity Program is a resource to teach our youth that God's Word is the foundation of their purity, the Word is first and priority. The youth get an opportunity to fellowship with like-minded youth where they begin to establish a firm foundation of what purity means so when temptation comes they will be equipped to stand with integrity in God's Word. We discuss topics based on age groups with the understanding that purity is really a matter of the heart; it is an inward reality that leads to outward behaviors. Sexual purity is essential to our walk with God it is not an option but obedience unto God."

"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." 1 Corinthians 6:18 - 20

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word". Psalm 119:9

CONSECRATION WEEK

March 21 – 25, 2016

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Psalm 133 (KJV)



"While reflecting on the highlights of 2016 we would be remiss if we didn't speak about our annual Consecration Week services. Our Harmony family, friends, and guests came together to fellowship and bond in the unity that God so desperately wants for His children. This year was an extraordinary week of basking in the presence of Almighty God. We assembled for five glorious days to enjoy Morning Prayer, midday bible study and evening worship services. We were blessed to hear the preached Word from Pastor Dennis Adams, Pastor Lecarston Chestnut, Pastor Purvis Hatcher, Pastor Kevin Elsey, and our own Pastor Owen Alston. This wonderful time culminated on Good Friday and set the stage for a powerful Resurrection Sunday fellowship whereby we worshiped our Savior and purposed in our hearts to exemplify Him." – Frankie Worthy



HAITI MISSION TRIP June 9th – 13th, 2016



“Grace and Peace be unto you from our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head of the body in which we live move and have our being. Just a word to all our friends and partners about our mission outreach throughout this year. We had the privilege of visiting our primary mission site down in Haiti in June of this year, and I was stirred by the progress and increase of the ministry there. We have four primary ministry sites in the country, and we’ve now expanded our reach even farther into the mountains with the addition of a satellite site to one of our primary sites. The satellite site allows us to teach children from primary thru age 18, many of whom have never been to school. Many thanks to all of our partners and friends who have come along with us to carry out the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ forever be granted to you.” – *Pastor Owen L. Alston*

The Fellowship Conference in Washington DC, July 12 – 14, 2016

“I was able to attend one day of the FICWCCM Conference in Washington DC. Although I knew that I was not going to be able to attend all of the days, I wanted to be a part of this awesome church meeting. As usual I love to round up my friends to go to a great event. We were so blessed by the anointing that was present in the worship service. The fellowship of East meets West confirmed that we are all one. The same Jesus lives in us all. That kindred spirit of love was evident in the workers, the ushers, the vendors, the leaders and all that we came in contact with. A beautiful experience. I look forward to our next gathering.” □ *Pamela Hill*



Week of Teaching, July 2016

“The minister/teachers class held this summer, on Tuesday’s during the month of July, was a tremendous asset to me because Pastor Alston outlined some fundamental tools necessary for effective ministry. He clearly defined some of the essential principles, characteristics, and the concept of ministers as written in the word. I was reminded that adequately studying the Word and preparing myself mentally to deliver the Word is important. However, as reinforced, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit should remain my ultimate authority as declared in Acts 1:8.” □ *Marilyn Phillips*



VBS and Back to School, August 22 - 26, 2016

Theme: VBS 2016 "I've Got Talent"



Our annual Vacation Bible School and Back to School program was coordinated by Min. Michael Singletary, Eva Richardson and a committee of dedicated members who taught God's Word faithfully. The teachers volunteered their services and were eager to challenge their classes from the youth to the seniors each day for a week of learning and fun, the students were excited and eager to participate. I can truly say that Harmony's got talent!! We had a creative panel that hosted "I've Got Talent" and we got a rare opportunity to witness a singing performance from one of our judges, a guest appearance from none other than Sis. Evey and what an amazing job our talented host did. The talent show consisted of karate demonstrations, a piano soloist, juggling act, to various soloist artists. I can only say the talent was amazing and ranged from all ages. Our judges enjoyed the many talented contestants but in the end the 1st place went to none other than our own Cynthia Mack.

Decision America Tour 2016 with Franklin Graham, September 14, 2016



I felt wonderful we were all on one accord praying for God to heal our land. It didn't matter about race, denomination we were all there to pray for the nation. There was a lot of love which is the way I believe it should be. Not worrying about denominations because we all serve one God. I thought it was beautiful I enjoyed it I wish we could have more gatherings like this our nation needs pray. I wish that our nation would be this way no hatred walking in love forgiving one another. I wish that the world was united as one focusing on God. If we can focus our attention like Pastor said tell the people about Jesus. Keeping our minds on God knowing that God have everything under control and seek God for our decisions. Keep praying for our leaders they need Christ." □

Dorothy Bray

**“One People, One Voice, One Sound, One Place for the One & Only Living God” at the JERSEY SHORE WORSHIP at Calvary Lighthouse
October, 1, 2016**



"The atmosphere was indeed charged as the throng of believers unleashed songs of praise, thanksgivings, and love unto our God! The Worship Ushers (singers, musicians, and dancers) were electric and inspirational, their expressions of Adoration for God touched my very soul. Yes! God made his presence known that night." □ *Debra Griffith*



HARMONY MINISTRY'S FAITH RESOURCE CENTER, GRAND OPENING

October 8, 2016



"My vision is to open the Resource Center to the community. There aren't many Retail Christian Bookstores in Ocean and Monmouth County. Spreading God's Word throughout the community is exciting to me. When Pastor asked me if I would be interested in becoming the manager of the Resource Center. I was very happy to accept the opportunity and immediately called my son Michael Carter to discuss the vision I had, so he could use his talents to design the look and feel of the Resource Center. My son and I are also designing the Online Store. Anyone will be able to order products from the Resource Center and ship to friends and family throughout the Country. We wanted the space design to be appealing and inviting to our customers to shop and stay a while. Co-Manager Vernell Morris and I have 12 "Harmonettes" working in the Resource Center" □

Brenda Carter

Hours of operation:

Sunday: 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM & 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
Wednesday 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM & 11:00 AM - 12:00 NOON



HARMONY MINISTRIES ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP



Harmony Ministries Scholarship Award is an annual event that is available to all the youth of Harmony Ministries that are graduating from High School and are accepted into an approved institution of higher education. This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth to participate in submitting their essays elaborating on their personal relationship with Christ. Parents are encouraged to have their youth to become active in this wonderful opportunity. This year's award was presented to Isiah Sams who is a phenomenal writer, and sets an example of his Christian walk in his school and everyday life. Congratulations to Isiah and I look forward to reading more poems and stories written by him.

PASTOR APPRECIATION SERVICE, October 30, 2016



"I am so grateful that God placed my family here at Harmony Ministries to be under the leadership of Pastor Owen Alston where the **Word is Made Alive**. Our Pastor's Appreciation Service gave the Harmony family a united opportunity to show our appreciation to both Pastor and First Lady for the sacrifices they make on our behalf. It was an exciting day to honor the man of God who preaches, teaches, and prays daily for us. Our Pastor is an exemplary example of being a doer of God's Word. God is Omniscient – Knowing the word would need to be made alive in my **HEART** in order for me to stand. My family and I give thanks to God for our Pastor and First Lady. Harmony Ministries is blessed having both of you!" – Tracey Sonds

My Pastor



In infinite wisdom the Lord surely knew,
That we'd need a Pastor as faithful as you.
A love of God's word, and a heart for his flock.
You give of yourself, and you stand on the rock.



"Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come their lives, and follow the example of their faith." (Hebrews 13:7 NLT)



Our Pastor's Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree



On Saturday, November 12th our Pastor received his ***Doctor of Divinity Degree*** from **St. Thomas Christian University** located in Jacksonville, Florida. Our First Lady gives us an account of the ceremony below:

"We were gathered together at the Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Florida to honor faithful men and women of God from all over the country who received their Doctor of Divinity Degree, which included our very own Pastor Owen L. Alston. The ceremony was something to behold; it was a blessing that I will remember! There were twenty-seven men and women of God that received their degrees. The valedictorian speaker was Dr. Harvey Witherspoon whose topic reiterated all that we have is from God, and to stir up the gift that the Lord has given us. The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Jackson charged the graduates based on 2 Timothy 4:1 – 5 to ***"Preach the Word"***. I am so proud and honored to call you my ***'PASTOR'***."

Congratulations Pastor Owen L. Alston!



*"For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given; And the
government will be upon His
shoulder. And His name will
be called Wonderful, Counse-
lor, Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace. Of the
increase of His government and
peace There will be no end."*



*On behalf of Rose and I, and all the unwavering labor-
ers here at Harmony Ministries, we bless all of our part-
ners and friends during this Christmas season as we cele-
brate the initial advent of our Savior Jesus Christ into the
earth. May each of you be blessed beyond measure, and
we pray that you continue to maintain good works until His
return.*

Pastor



Fulfilling the Great Commission

by Brenda Benjamin

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?” Micah 6:8

When I received the topic of my assignment for this article I was baffled because I couldn't see the connection between the Great Commission and the scriptural reference I was given. The scriptures that I associated with this call of God on every born again believer were Matthew 28:18-20 or Mark 16:15-20. Therefore, I went before the Lord in prayer and asked the Holy Spirit to give me greater understanding and insight to what God wanted revealed in this article that I wasn't seeing, and I was led to look up the word "commission." In my 1964 Webster 7th Collegiate Dictionary I found the following definition:

Commission- an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts; a charge; an authority to act for in behalf of or in place of another; a task or matter entrusted to one as an agent for another.

We have been authorized by Jesus to bring others into the Kingdom of God, and it was revealed to me that Micah 6:8 has *everything* to do with the Great Commission; these are our marching orders. We are to live a life of integrity, loving mercy (or being compassionate toward others, and then walking humbly before God) never forgetting that without Him we are nothing; always acknowledging Him as the source of everything good in our lives.

That is our holy calling that draws others to us, so we can tell them about Jesus and all that He has done.

God is good and kind, and He does good as it says in Psalms 119:68 (AMPC), yet there are so many people that don't know that God wants them to have a good life, and it is our responsibility as believers to tell everyone we can about the love of God. Many believers have the misconception that missionary work is going to a foreign land such as Africa, China, Guatemala, or the Philippines to share the Good News of Christ. However, there are people all around us who need to know that God loves them and that Jesus died to give them eternal life. They need to know that He came so that they may have and enjoy abundant life, to the full until it overflows, as it says in John 10:10 (AMPC).

There is an old adage that says, "grow where you are planted." How many of us don't know our neighbors on a first name basis? How many of us go to the same gas station and have the same attendant pump our gas, but never speak to that person? How many of us go to the same supermarket to purchase groceries and never take the time to acknowledge the person waiting on us?

We are missing the calling that Jesus has placed on our lives in John 14:12 (AMPC) which says, "I assure you

most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.”

That is our commission as born again believers, to love people and show mercy everywhere we go, even when it is inconvenient. It means stepping out of your comfort zone and speaking to people that may not look like you, or dress like you, or who live differently than you do. We are not called to live a life of comfort because God is about change, and He is always moving. He wants us available and ready to be used for His purpose to affect the lives of others.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we should be waiting to get our assignment from the Holy Spirit every day; because there are people in our midst who are mistreated, abused, misused, depressed, hopeless and discouraged, and we have the answer and solution. We have the opportunity to be personal representatives for the kingdom of God and reconcile them to the love of Jesus Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 (AMPC) it says, “So we are Christ’s ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We (as Christ’s personal representatives) beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favor (now offered you) and be reconciled to God.”

I can’t even imagine living this life without the guidance, help and comfort of the Holy Spirit, the fellowship and love that I have for my Abba Father, and the love and assurance that I have in Jesus, knowing that He will never leave me nor forsake me. Life would be almost unbearable to live today according to what I know and can achieve in my own strength.

This is why we must have compassion, kindness, love and mercy for the unsaved of this world. Compassion, integrity, humility, and faithfulness are issues of the heart. Nothing is more important to God than what is in a person’s heart.

God is looking for integrity and compassion. He’s looking for humility and faithfulness. So, if we are a people of integrity, if we walk in love, if we remain humble and if we are faithful, then our hearts are conditioned to love others and be passionate about bringing others into the kingdom and “Fulfilling the Great Commission.”

In closing, we are saved by God! Called by God! We are to Act like God! Speak like God! And Get God’s Results!!



Peace in the Christmas Season

By Michael Clausen

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:18 (NKJV)

This is the season of peace, renewed hope, joy and thanksgiving. Unfortunately, some people suffering from depression are unable to feel the peace that the season brings. This is certainly not what the Lord wants for His people and He gives us ways to combat it and bring His peace into our hearts.

Firstly, it is important to recognize there are several types of depression, and some people may require medication to help lift them enough to be able to allow God to work in their hearts and minds. Therefore, if you are suffering from a clinical type of depression, please, seek appropriate medical help – remember that God gave the doctors their skills and abilities too.

Our God is a tender and loving God and He will not force Himself on us. We have been given free will and it is up to us to welcome Him into our hearts and minds, and build us up to be used in His divine plan. This article is a Biblical approach to overcoming depression and is *not* intended to be a medical solution or direction.

As we have heard, and come to know, God provides for all of our needs in His time and according to His plan for each of us; *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:6 NKJV)*. It is important for us to recognize that there is a plan, and the Lord has given us direction when it comes to our thoughts and how to control them. *“...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on*

these things” (Philippians 4:8 NKJV). The Lord directs us to deliberately think on good things; this is especially important when our thoughts turn to the negative and morose. *We control* what thoughts we will entertain and give a place in our minds.

The enemy constantly tries to put negative thoughts into our heads in his attempts to accuse us and turn us from the one true God and rob us of our peace. We know that salvation comes through Christ and in Him we have justification from our sins. God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins and if we accept Him and invite Him in, He will abide in our hearts and do great things. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3:20)*. What could be better to fill us with joy and peace than having the Lord of all inside our hearts?

In her book, *Battlefield of the Mind*, Joyce Meyers writes about “Wilderness Mentalities,” which she describes as a mindset of complaining, bemoaning and failing to take hold of what God says to us, causing us to wander around in circles of despair, going nowhere. Of particular note is the mentality #8 which says, “I don’t deserve God’s blessings because I am not worthy.” Moses sent twelve spies into the Land of Canaan to scope out the situation there. As we know, ten of them came back with disheartened reports reflecting a lower opinion of themselves and what God was capable of doing. How depressing! We, like the ten spies, often allow ourselves to be stripped of peace. We often feel we are not worthy of peace, though nothing could be further from

the truth!

This is not new because there are many episodes of depression revealed in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as many verses of instruction on dealing with depression, God's way! David had bouts of depression. He wrote songs about it, recorded in the Psalms, where he cried out to the Lord to deliver him from the desperation he was facing. But God! *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy(1 Peter 4:12,13 NKJV).*

The whole point of what Jesus endured for our benefit was so we didn't have to go through the pain and suffering that was rightfully ours. The Lord took all of our pain, all of our sickness, all of our desperation. He wants peace for His children and for us to be His ambassadors to the people of all nations. It would not make sense for anyone to want to be a follower of Christ if His ambassadors are glum and unhappy! *"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV).* God will not leave you. He will be there even when it doesn't feel

like it. "When you cannot see God's hand, trust His heart" (Anonymous).

Peace does not necessarily come to us without effort, and if all we had to do was just go about our lives singing sunshine and roses and bluebirds of happiness, we would not recognize peace for the blessing it is. *Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; (1 Peter 3:10 ESV).*

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Our Lord this season, let us all take time to reflect and meditate on the blessings that the Lord has provided for us, and to share with one another the joy the Lord has made possible by His death, burial, and Resurrection, for without this, there would be no hope, no joy, no peace. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace(Isaiah 9:6 NKJV).*

This season let us meditate on the "good things" the Lord has prepared for us and thank God for all of the blessings He has given us. Let us be grateful for all we have and the peace in our hearts. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a Spirit filled New Year!



Limitless

by Cindy J. Brown

JOSHUA 1:9 HAVE I NOT COMMANDED YOU? BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS.

DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED, AND DO NOT BE DISMAYED,
FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.

If a rich uncle bequeathed you a huge fortune and a home on a prime piece of real estate, and all you had to do to gain immense wealth beyond your wildest imagination was to accept your inheritance and move in, would you do it? Indeed, as followers of Christ believers are heirs to just such a fortune, and all we have to do is enter in to the Kingdom of God by embracing His word and incorporating it into our lives.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Our God is the creator of all things: the universe, the heavens, the seas, the earth and everything in it, including us. There is nothing that He cannot do and nothing that He does not command. This omnipotent and omniscient God is ours! He is our shield and our buckler (Psalms 91:4), and He put all adversities beneath our feet (Matthew 22:44). By His shed blood and resurrection Jesus has given us a great inheritance and moved us into His kingdom.

As citizens of God's kingdom we have the full support of heaven moving mightily in

our lives to bless us in every way. By placing our full faith in the power of

Christ to manage our lives, we have been elevated from the slums into prime real estate. When we accept our inheritance and take up residence in our prime real estate, we move from Lack Avenue, leaving behind insufficiency and inadequacy, onto Bounty Lane where circumstances no longer deter us because there is light at the end of all of our tunnels.

People often suffer from performance anxiety because they are out of alignment with God's plan for their lives. Anxiety, stress, loneliness, and frustration are all feelings which stem from a lack of understanding about one's personhood and citizenship, i.e. who you are and whose you are, and where you live. However, when you are in alignment with God's will you won't feel anxious or fearful, and you will be more productive in all that you do; this is true because God will order your steps and make all things turn out for your good.





Our God is the God of the impossible, in Him nothing is beyond our reach. All things were created by Him and for Him, and as we continue steadfastly in His word, we gain a spiritual confidence that propels us beyond our own human might, and we operate under the power of Almighty God. Then, two plus two no longer necessarily amounts to four because when we follow Christ and trust in Him, the possibilities for our successes are infinite ... ***in Christ we are limitless!***

It has always been so clear to me that I belong to my Father in Heaven, and it has been something that I've always innately known. Early in life I adopted the motto, "just do it" and it is my custom to meet life and challenges full steam ahead; in fact, I cannot fathom living it any other way. In my youth, it used to baffle me that people marveled at my confidence; and conversely, I could not comprehend their hesitancy to move forward in doing those things that they professed to want to do. As I matured, I came to the realization that my very self-identity in Christ and innate understanding that *I am His*, is in and of itself a blessing from God, because not everyone has such

clarity. Knowing this humbles me and fills me with thankfulness to and for my Savior.

This Christmas season I pray that you give yourself the gift of embracing your very limitlessness in Christ. Be joyful, coming together with loved ones to bask in the blessings that Jesus has bestowed upon us; reflecting upon His saving grace and the tender mercies of our Lord; the power and authority that He has given to us to rule over all things in this earth; and the loving kindness that He pours down upon us daily.

2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.



***** PRAYER OF SALVATION *****

DO YOU KNOW...?

GOD LOVES YOU

JESUS DIED FOR YOUR SINS

YOU CAN RECEIVE JESUS NOW AND KNOW GOD'S LOVE

The basis of the Prayer of Salvation comes from Romans 10:9-10, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

However, I would like to direct you to Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Grace is mentioned over 100 times in the Bible. Grace is God's unmerited favor and because of God's grace, we receive eternal life and a promise of heaven. Grace is necessary for salvation as we cannot do enough good works or make enough right choices to earn our salvation. The Bible teaches that we are justified by the grace of God (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7). Justified means declared not guilty. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, all charges against us are dropped and we are free from sin. When God forgives our sins, the record is wiped clean. It is as if we had never sinned.

A preacher once explained grace with this acronym:

God's - Riches - At - Christ's - Expense

PRAY THIS PRAYER OUT LOUD:

Heavenly Father, In Jesus' name I repent of my sins and open my heart to let Jesus come inside of me. Jesus, You are my Lord and Savior. I believe you died for my sins and you were raised from the dead. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Thank you Father, for saving me in Jesus' name. Amen.

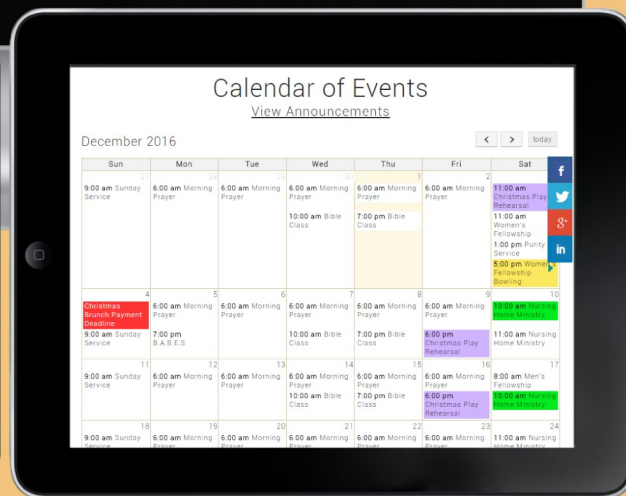
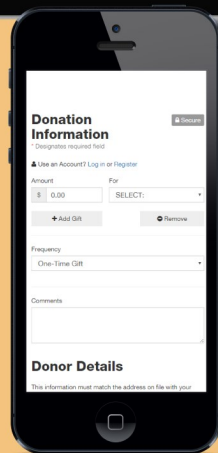
If you've prayed this prayer of salvation with true conviction, you are now a follower of Jesus.

Welcome to the family of God! We encourage you now to find a local church where you can be baptized and grow in the knowledge of God through His Word, the Bible.

By: Jacqueline Cuavers



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Merry Christmas

MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU
WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE AS YOU
TRUST IN HIM, SO THAT YOU MAY
OVERFLOW WITH HOPE BY THE
POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

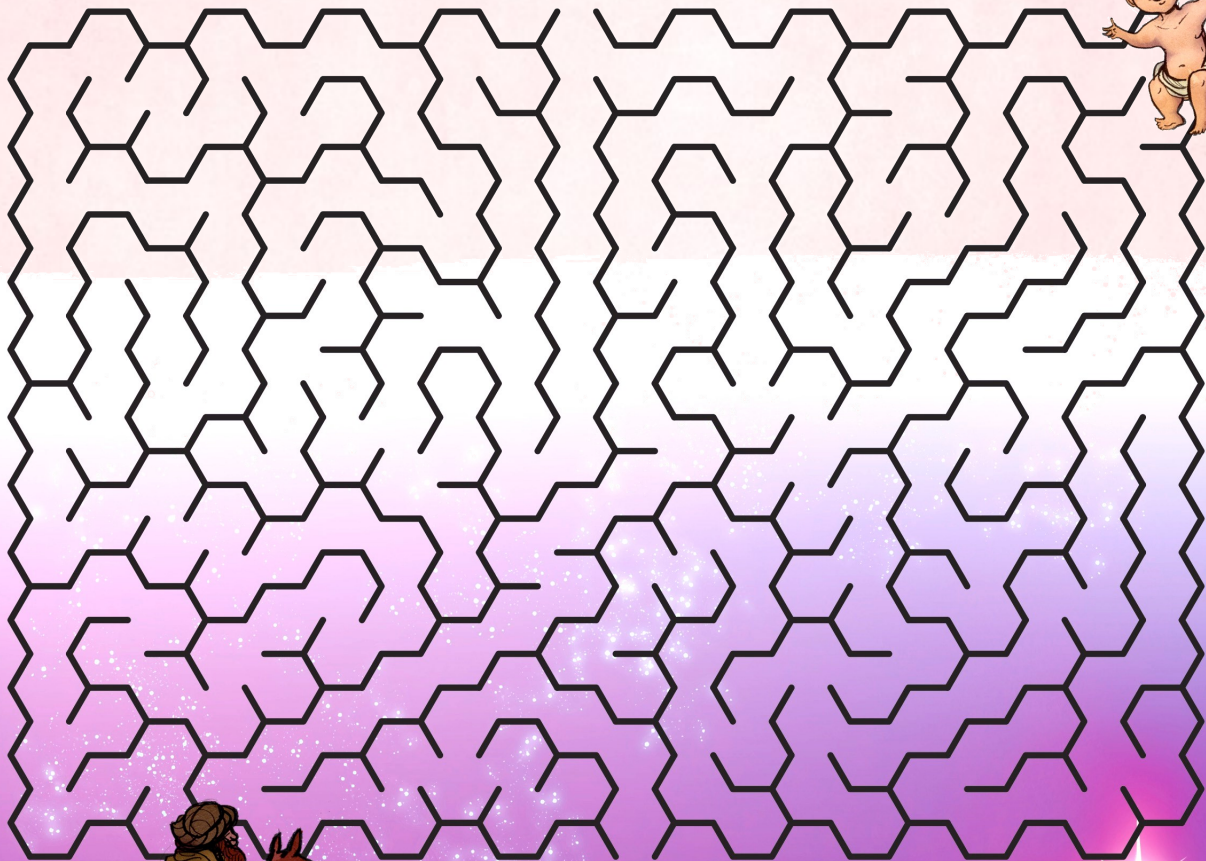
ROMANS 15:13



Get through the maze

Help the Wise Men follow the star to find Baby Jesus.

FINISH

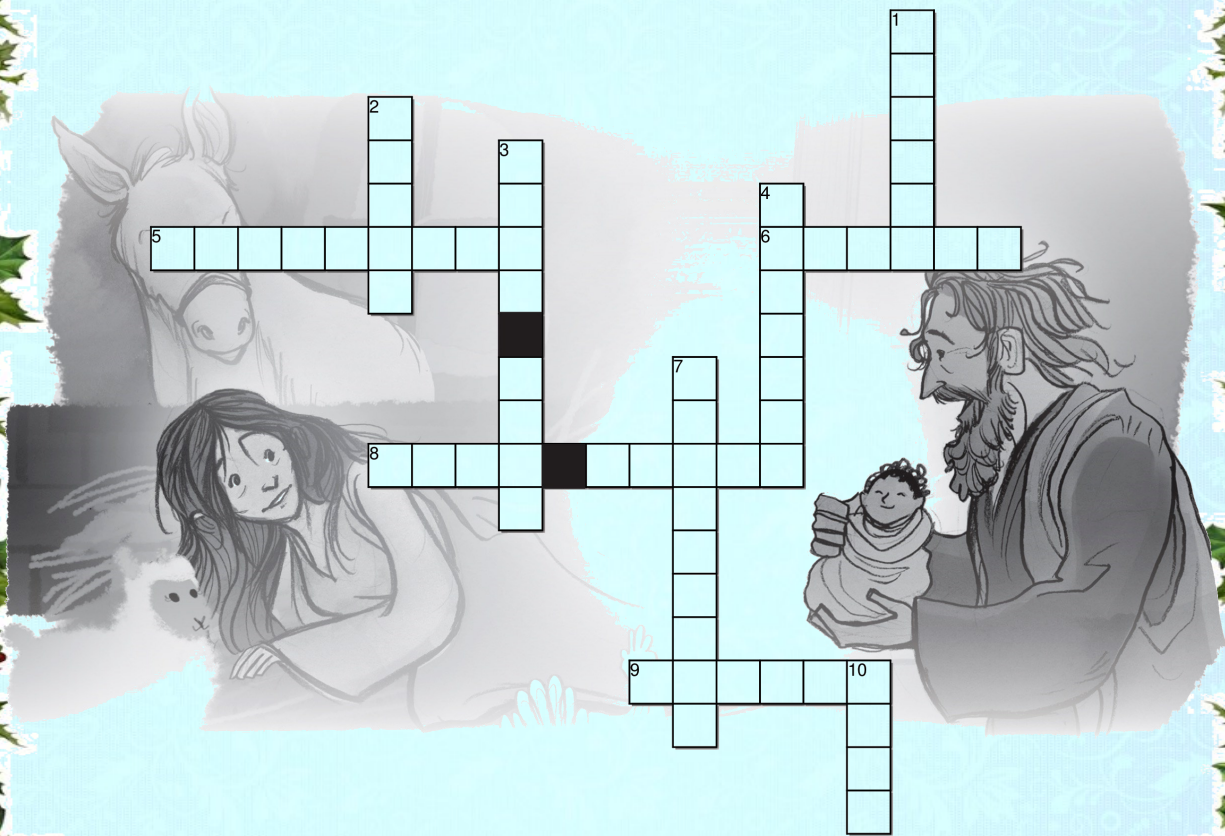


START



Game Pages

Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2



Across

5. Jesus, the Messiah, had been promised and prophesied about _____ of years before.
6. Who sang to the shepherds?
8. Who wanted the wise men to bring Jesus to him, so he could kill Jesus?
9. Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem so they could be counted in a _____.

Down

1. Jesus was born in a _____, because there weren't any other rooms available.
2. To calm Joseph's worries, an angel spoke to Joseph in a _____.
3. An angel told Mary that her son would be called Son of the _____.
4. Mary and Joseph were worried about having a baby because they weren't yet _____.
7. What job did Joseph have?
10. What led the wise men to Jesus?



Write to Us

*Send Letters and comments about any
article, include your name,
address, and email to:
Letters to the Editor*

“The Word Made Alive”

MAGAZINE

Harmony Ministries USA, Inc.
401 Chestnut Street
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*Selected letters may be edited
for length and clarity.
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TO:

Weekly Service

Monday through Friday Early Morning Prayer & Devotion 6-7am

Saturday Morning Prayer & Devotion 8-9am

Wednesday Bible Class 10am

Thursday Evening Bible Class 7pm

Sunday Service 9am

Youth Ministry Department

Youth Group 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month.

Purity Program meets 1st Saturday of each month at 1:00pm

Special Programs To Be Announced!