



The Jabez Report

*Merry
Christmas*
“*Greater*”

Greater Saint John Cathedral

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A Christmas Message from our Bishop

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.



Call It Light

I believe when we dive into scriptures, we find things, serendipitous, which means that you find something of value that you were not intentionally searching for. This is the case when I looked again at **2nd Corinthians 4:17**, let me show what I mean, and how it can assist the Body of Christ, especially the Disciples of the Greater Saint John Cathedral:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
2nd Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)

There are some scriptures that we must grow into, meaning that it takes on a different meaning as you matriculate and navigate through life. So as you grow, the scripture grows in your life.

This is exactly the case for this Scripture, Paul the Apostle is my friend, if not my best friend. He has walked me through some of the most difficult times of my life. What Paul was able to endure, goes without mentioning that he is the Hercules of the Bible, but not from the outside but from the inside.

The affliction that Paul seemly casually mentions is not light for most of us. Tragedy after tragedy affected his life. He was jailed, whipped, beaten, shipwrecked, bitten by snakes, etc.

Now here is the most amazing part, Paul calls it light. Now allow me to share with you the power of the text for me. If Paul can call it light, so can I. Just maybe, and I mean just possibly, The Lord is waiting on us to call our afflictions light.

I encourage you to call your afflictions **LIGHT!**

Season's Greetings



Jesus Is The Reason For The Season

Author Unknown

Submitted by: Sister Sylvia Tyson

Our hearts are filled with joy because of a special baby boy.

Love was born on Christmas morn'.

Happy birthday, Jesus!

He started his life in a manger, and for us, he put himself in danger.

Christmas is about new life!

I'm sending my prayers and best wishes this Holiday.

Be blessed by our most precious Christmas gift and then pass on that blessing
to those you encounter.

We are blessed to celebrate the birthday of the most important person to ever live.
He keeps giving us His *presence* every year.

I pray that you feel loved this Christmas. Our Lord loves you, and I do too.

Take time to thank Him for the gift we received thousands of years ago.

I hope you find meaning and joy while going about your Christmas activities.
There's never a wrong time to be grateful.

Just think how much power and potential there was in the manger.

The epic story that started in a stable is much more than just a childhood fable.

Season's Greetings



Making the Right Choice at Christmas

1st Lady Denise Gresham

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” **Luke 2:13-14 (KJV)***

Greetings My Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ.

I greet you with the amazing love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I thank Him for being so loving to us through another challenging year.

Tis' the Season to be merry and stressed. Although it should be a Season of peace, this month can often make us feel more tangled up inside than a messy string of Christmas lights.

Some of us dread the hustle and bustle that this time of year brings, knowing that irritability, loneliness or depression will threaten us. While there are some of us who love the Christmas Season, but worry, business, family conflicts and unmet expectations take their toll.

In either case, we have a decision to make. We can choose to get bogged down with stress or we can choose to bow down in worship.

We know the Christmas story about the birth of Jesus, but in **Luke 2:13-14** it gives us a beautiful picture of praise. When Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds sharing the good news. Then other angels joined together and praised God.

Angels serve as role models of worship. They bow down before Jesus. They shout with incredible joy as they sing songs of praise. Through worship, angels spread the news of God's glory and exhibit holy reverence. Angels intentionally and deliberately spend time praising God.

Keeping Christ in Christmas is more than just a cliché. It is an intentional act of worship. It requires a heart of adoration, much like the angels had. When Jesus is the focus of our Holidays, we're centered on His love, peace and joy.

The Holidays can bring a flurry of heightened emotions and can often result in an unhealthy level of stress which can prevent us from engaging in worship and praising the One we are supposed to be celebrating.

There will be lots of choices to be made during the month of December: where to serve, what gifts to buy and how many events to attend. The most important choice we can make is to worship and sing praises to our Lord, for His gift, His love and His peace. When our hearts are at peace, our holidays can be too. Let us choose to intentionally worship and praise our Lord during this Christmas Season.

I wish you a very **Merry Christmas** and a happy, healthy, prosperous and safe **New Year**. I'm sending a virus free virtual hug and love just for you! I love you, but God loves you best!

Season's Greetings



Promises, Promises

The Deacon's Ministry

The story is told of a young girl preparing for her Quinceanera. The Quinceanera is a coming-of-age celebration that symbolizes a girl's transition from childhood to womanhood. It's celebrated all over Latin America.

The first part of the Quinceanera is a Thanksgiving Mass at church. It encourages a girl to take responsibility for her own spiritual well-being. At the Thanksgiving Mass, the girls are given a Bible and a locket with a picture of the Virgin Mary.

In our story, as the evening approached, it began to snow. The young girl watched from the window as the fresh snow covered the ground. The fresh snow made things so quiet. She enjoyed the quiet before the celebration. As she gazed out the window, she waited with great expectation for her grandfather's arrival.

Suddenly, the snow turned into a storm and her parents called to her to prepare for her big day. "Sweetheart, it's time to prepare yourself for the events of the day." "I'm waiting on Grandpa," she replied. "We can't start without him." Baby, can't you see the roads are covered with snow?" her mother said. "He's not going to be able to get here. The buses are not running."

"He's coming. He said he would be here with me and he will. We can't start without him," the girl answered.

Her mother replied, "You're about to turn fifteen, it's about time to grow up. You have to be more mature about things like this. You have to understand that it is not always possible to keep your promise.

The girl went outside to take another look. She wondered to herself, "Why do I have to grow up if it means understanding that people can't or won't keep their word? If that's what is meant by growing up, I'd rather remain a child."

Suddenly, in the distance, she saw him. He was treading through the high snow. It was a struggle. As he got closer, she ran to meet him. "You made it! You're here! I knew you would come." she cried, as tears rolled down her face.

"Of course, I'm here. I said, I would," he replied. As he walked into the house, her parents were astonished. "You had to walk all this way in that heavy snow. You didn't have to come. She would have understood", her mother said. "When you make a child a promise, you keep it", he said. Likewise, God has made us a promise to be with us. *Isaiah 40:8* tell us, "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. In *Matthew 24:35*, Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

God uses a promise to ignite our faith. We know that when we can't trust anything else, we can trust God's promise to us. As we go into the New Year, I am extremely optimistic about the future of the Universal Church and the Greater Saint John Cathedral.

Jesus promised us in *Matthew 16:18-19* that "And I say to you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven."

I challenge all of us to be like our Father in Heaven. Promises are promises. The words we utter are sacred. I realize we live in a city where some make promises just to be elected and once elected, the promises are rarely fulfilled. However, it makes no difference how others behave, we must honor our promises - *Jesus did!*

Season's Greetings



God is in Control

Minister Arthur Williams

There is a lot going on in the World today. One can get overwhelmed by thinking too seriously about all that is going on. To name a few: 1) What has become of our political leadership? 2) Our World's climate change is out of control. 3) Domestic terrorism; such as, school shootings. 4) Racism. There are just too many issues to list.

From time to time, the children of God get to a point of feeling on edge, worried or anxious – not just a few of them, but many. Uncertainty in our Country concerning these affairs and many others, can be overwhelming and lead to a train wreck of fear.

In most cases, fear does not sneak upon you. It hits you like a speeding train. Fear itself will not kill you, but it can crush your faith. Then there are other times when fear erodes your faith like tartar does to our teeth. In fact, fear is one of Satan's most used tactics to get us to doubt God.

If we focus on the things that are within our control, we will be better off. You see, this is God's World and everything in it according to *Psalm 24.1*

We have the power to overcome anxiety and fear with God's promises. *Isaiah 55:8-9* says "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." says the Lord. "For as the Heavens are higher than earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Despite what we feel, we need to remind ourselves that God is in control. When everything around us feels out of control, we can allow Scripture to prove to us that God has been, is and will be sovereign over our lives and world. He is our peace and comfort.

Season's Greetings



Thank You, Lord

Minister Deborah Williams

Psalm 107:1 - Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever.”

Did you know that there are approximately 7.9 billion people on the planet? Can you imagine what it would be like if they all gave thanks to the LORD! The reason we should give thanks is put in the song by Walter Hawkins “Thank You, Lord for All You’ve Done for Me”.

Tragedies are common place with
all kinds of diseases.
People are slipping away.
The economy is down.
People can’t get enough pay,
but as for me, all I can say is
thank you Lord, for all You have done for me.

(It could have been me) thank You,
(outdoors) thank You,
(with no food) thank You,
(and no clothes) thank You,
(or all alone) thank You,
(without a friend) thank You,
(or just another number) thank You,
(with a tragic end) thank You, oh.
(But you didn’t see fit) thank You,
(to let none of those things be) thank You.
(Cause everyday by Your power) thank You.
(You keep on keeping me) thank You.
Thank You Lord for all You have done for me.

(I wanna thank You for Your love) thank You,
(I wanna thank You for Your power) thank You,
(I wanna thank You for protection) thank You,
(every hour) thank You.

THANK YOU, LORD - GLORY TO YOU!!

Season's Greetings

And Mary Waited

Minister NaShieka Knight



Advent is the time in the Christian calendar where we remember the coming of Christ. Through the life of Mary, His mother, we are invited to witness divine disruption, humble submission, belly-leaping reunion and holy waiting. We are given a front row seat as she moves from prophecy to promise and we watch with expectancy as Mary waits.

I was recently talking with a friend who is pregnant with her first child. She lamented about the discomfort she was feeling as she nears the final stage. I tried to comfort her, “You are preparing for something big. This is not an easy task. Your body, your habits, your time, your outlook on life...everything about you is preparing for this shift. The tiny human that you carry is getting into position. This discomfort is not without purpose.” My prayer was that having a sense of purpose would help my friend to withstand while she waited. In this Season of Advent, some of us may find ourselves like Mary the mother of Jesus and like my friend, waiting in the final stretch. Waiting is holy and when done well, can be a gift.

While Mary waited, she changed her surroundings and kept company with someone who was also preparing to give birth. As you wait, spend time with those who are likeminded, whose conversation affirms your hope. In the words of Clarissa Pinkola Estes in *Women who Run with the Wolves*, find your pack. You'll know when you've found your pack because things inside you will come alive, leaping in holy affirmation.

Next, find a spiritual midwife to journey with you while you wait. This is someone who can coach you through the pain until you successfully give birth, someone who will ensure that you and that which you carry are in the right position, at the right time. Your midwife can see what you can't. A seasoned midwife will watch over you and will look to see if you need reassurance, refocusing or repositioning.

Lastly, as you wait, prepare for the arrival of the thing you hoped for. Make space. Gather your resources. Get your house and your life in order. When you finally get to see what you waited for, when you get to hold what you heard about, when you give birth to what you carried, discomfort will give way to joy. Pain will acquiesce to relief. The waiting will have been worth it.

May this Holiday Season be filled with divine disruption, humble submission, belly-leaping reunions and holy waiting.

Season's Greetings



Merry Christmas

Deacon Charles E. Napper

During this Holiday Season, let the Love, Joy and Peace of Jesus fill your hearts. Giving thanks to the Lord with a grateful heart. Let the fellowship of the Holy Spirit lead the way a testimony of walking in holiness and righteousness before all.



Merry Christmas St. John

Harry and Deaconess Joyce Bazemore

⁷Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. And whose hope is in the Lord. ⁸For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by The river, And will not fear when heat comes; But it's leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. Jeremiah 17:7-8 (nkjv)

For the past forty years, Jeremiah 17:7-8 has been the fundamental scripture for our business. Throughout the good and bad, ups and downs God has been so faithful to the promises in His word.

Blessings to each of you for an awesome Holiday Season and have a happy and safe New Year!

Season's Greetings



“All I Want For Christmas Is You”

Sister Janice Shields

This time of year “All I Want for Christmas”, by Mariah Carey, is one of my all-time favorite songs. Before I know it, I’m holding an empty roll of paper towels, as my microphone, singing as loud and bubbly as I can. As with most situations, as I get older things and words have a deeper meaning to me, since at this point in my life, I take nothing for granted. So, with a light-hearted spirit, I hope you enjoy my twist on “All I want for Christmas Is You.”

Lyrics

I don't want a lot for Christmas;
there is just one thing I need.
I don't care about the presents underneath the Christmas tree.
Lord, you are so much more
than you could ever know.
You make my dreams come true.
All I want for Christmas is Y o u, Jesus!

I don't want a lot for Christmas,
there is just one thing I need.
Don't care about the presents underneath the Christmas tree.
There's no need to make a list of all the things you've blessed me with.

Santa Claus won't make me happy with joy on Christmas Day.
Lord you are so much more than
you could ever know.
You make my dreams come true.
Lord, all I want for Christmas is
Y o u, Jesus!

Oh, I won't ask for much this Christmas.
I won't even wish for snow.
I'm just gonna keep on thanking you, cause I love Y o u so!
All I want for Christmas is Y o u, Jesus!!
All I want for Christmas is Y o u, Jesus!!

Merry Christmas!

Season's Greetings



Regift the Gift

Minister Christina Williams

I know most of you have been in this situation before; it's Christmas morning and your loved one hands you a gift. They are excited for you to open it. The anticipation is high, but when you unwrap the gift, you realize you don't love it. Let's be real, you don't even like it! How do you react? Most people do the right thing by putting on a happy face and thanking their loved one for the gift. What do you do with that unwanted gift in the days and months after Christmas? Do you regift the gift?

Regifting, or giving a previously received gift to someone else, used to be taboo. However, according to a recent survey published in the *Huffington Post*, 83% of Americans believe regifting is an acceptable practice; especially if the gift is regifted to someone who will love, cherish and use the gift!

The Bible tells us in **James 1:17** that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights. **John 3:16** tells us that God so loved the world that He gave (He gifted) His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **Luke 2:11** says, For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. These scriptures all reference The Gift given to us by God.

The Gift that was sent by God to save the world was born into this world in a lowly manger. The Gift, walked this earth with no place to lay His head. The Gift was perfect. The Gift knew no sin, yet became sin for our salvation. Yet, the Gift was still persecuted, mistreated, abused and accused. The Gift was despised and rejected by men. The Gift hung, bled and was left to die. The Gift, the Perfect Gift, was unwanted.

This Holiday Season, as you celebrate and exchange gifts with your loved ones, I ask you what will you do with the unwanted gifts that you receive? Specifically, what will you do with The Gift God gave you; The Perfect Gift, that was despised, rejected and unwanted by men? Will you Regift the Gift? Will you give someone The Gift of Jesus? Before answering consider this; the beauty of regifting The Gift of Jesus is that you still get to keep The Gift and you can regift The Gift again and again! The Gift of Jesus is the gift that keeps on giving!

So, remember it's an acceptable practice to regift unwanted gifts, and I encourage you this Christmas to regift The Gift of Jesus for He is The Greatest Gift of all!

Merry Christmas!

Season's Greetings



Be Faithful

Minister Minnie Torrey

Greetings Greater Family.

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good! The last two years have been challenging for all of us, but God has been good to us. His Grace and Mercy has kept us and we are still surviving! He has been our protector, shelter, Rock, friend, strength everything! We owe Him everything and so much more.

God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

I believe that through prayer and continued faith in God, we are still able to make it. God said, I will never leave you or forsake you, because He knows what is best for us. Saints, continue to walk with faith in the Lord and not by sight. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil in these evil days, and having done all, stand, **“YOU STAND”**.

We have heard the statement, Miracles happen at Christmas time. May 2022, be bright and merry for all and be the best year for everyone. Continue to love one another, be kind and faithful.

Merry Christmas to each and every one of you! Be Blessed.



He is There

Minister Tracey Reid

Greetings Greater Family and Friends.

What trials and tribulations have the Lord brought you through recently? Was it the loss of a job, the death of a family member or friend, illness or depression? **James 1:2-3** says to count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Trials will come no matter who we are, but I would like to encourage us to look to the Lord, have faith and be patient. **Psalms 121:1-2** says “I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” No matter what we are going through, God is always there to give us peace through our valley for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

May God continue to grant you peace, joy and everlasting mercy in the coming year.

Merry Christmas all and a very prosperous New Year!

Season's Greetings



The Tree

Pastor Stanley Copening

Merry Christmas Saint John. During this season of celebration one thing stands out across this world is the tree. No matter where we have been in the world, everyone accepts the tree as the symbol of the Season.

We are in Germany now and Christmas celebration is Big. We see trees decorated all over as they are in the USA. Just recently, I put up our tree, decorated it and put on Christmas songs and then it happened. The Tree really stood out to me...This tree that we decorated, proclaiming the birth of Christ, is one that people look forward to all year long. I realized that this Tree means a lot to people all over the world, but Jesus came not only for us to remember his birth, but to understand his life, death, burial and resurrection!

All of these things must and was accomplished on The Tree! The Tree of everlasting life. Let us not forget in this Season The Tree that brought us salvation and Everlasting life!

While you decorate your Tree, with all kinds of things, don't forget that Jesus gave his life on The Tree (The Cross) that we might have life.

May your Christmas be filled with joy and remembrance as you celebrate around The Tree!



Merry Christmas Greater

Deacon Anthony & Sarah Thomas

*Praying you will find an abundance of happiness as we celebrate this holiday remembering that Jesus is the Reason for the Season!
May you all experience all the Love and Joy of your loved ones that you can and treasure every moment with family.*

Merry Christmas

Season's Greetings



Merry Christmas Saint John

MIT Melissa Monroe

Merry Christmas Saint John! May your Christmas be filled with peace, laughter, love, happiness and goodwill.

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. –Isaiah 7:14

It has been such a long time since we have been together. I miss all of you so very much and can hardly wait until I see you again; prayerfully very soon. Let us take the time to celebrate the love of God and family. Cherish not only this day, but every day with the ones you love.

Let us be reminded of the goodness of God and all He has done for us, but don't limit God to what He has done in the past because He delights to do new things. This year, expect Him to do just that.

My prayer for you all during this Christmas Season is that you stay safe and well, in the Name of Jesus. That God blesses you and your household. That our Father will smile favorably upon you and bless the work of your hands. I pray that God will enlarge your territories and whatever obstacles are standing in your way be they removed in the Name of Jesus. I pray that God will bless your comings and your goings and that the Lord will encamp His angels around you. I pray the Lord will comfort you and keep you always.

Amen

I love you, my Greater Family. Peace, Love and God's Blessings.



Don't Get Caught Up

Deaconess Wynnice Pointer-Napper

Greetings Greater Family and Friends.

It's so easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of everything that this world has to offer. After all, it's a beautiful place! However, we can eventually become confused and disoriented if we don't keep God at the center. When that happens, let **James 1:17** remind you that *"every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights."* Being mindful of this will help us put our focus where it should be this Holiday Season, as we enjoy the blessings from our Heavenly Father. The closer we stay to Him, the easier it becomes to find and follow His will for our life—which leads to the best blessings of all. So, as we spend time with the Lord this month, let us set our gaze on Him so His faithfulness becomes the light that guides us this Holiday Season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Season's Greetings



Through it all Trust God!

Deacon Gregory Battle

Philippians 4:6-9 NIV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

As we are moving forward and adjusting to a new normal, many of us find ourselves stuck on what COVID has prevented us from achieving. Please understand this; God is a God of promises. From the first chapter of the Bible, Scripture makes a case for the dependability of God. Nine times the text reiterates “God said.” Without exception, when God spoke something happened. By divine decree, there was light, land, oceans and creatures. The only conclusion to draw from that is God’s word is sure and His promises can be trusted.

So what if we had to stay in and could not move around in our familiar spaces like before. Maybe God was trying to get our attention or maybe He was keeping us from harm. Whatever the reason, God’s plans always work for the good of those who trust in Him. God is our anchor. There are 4 points that I’d like to leave with you.

- 1. Hold on – God’s got you!** He understands our pain. The stunning idea is simply this: God, for a time, became one of us. If you ever wonder if God listens, He does. If you ever wonder if the Creator can comprehend the challenges you are facing, then ponder long and hard the promise that Jesus is “able to understand our weaknesses” (*Hebrews 4:15*).
- 2. Overcome Despair with Prayer.** When life overwhelms, pray to the One who is in charge, and know that He is praying for you. Will God do what you ask? Perhaps or perhaps He will do more than you imagine. Stand firmly on the promise that “when a believing person prays, great things happen” (*James 5:16*). Also, ponder this truth: Jesus, right now, at this moment, is in the midst of whatever the problem we are facing, is speaking on your behalf. He is calling out to the Heavenly Father. He is advocating for a special blessing to be sent your way. You do not fight the wind and waves alone. Every day He speaks up for you. “He always lives to intercede for [us]” (*Romans 8:34*).
- 3. Pull together when life comes apart.** In times of extreme challenge, we can divide or we can unite. One of the beautiful things that can emerge from times of trouble is extravagant compassion and care for our neighbors – crossing lines and building bridges. Our pain bears fruit if it reminds us that everyone has value, and we were created by God, in God’s image, for God’s glory (*Genesis 1:26*).

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Season's Greetings



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4. Evil exists, but it does not win! Yes, we'd rather have a storm-free life, but we can count on the devil stirring up trouble and fear. Take heart, God has overcome! Satan's days are numbered. So in those moments when all that is good appears to lose, you do not need to worry. Remind the evil one that "The God who brings peace will soon defeat Satan and give you power over him" (*Romans 16:20*).

Hold tight to these lifelines and remember: what I'm anchored to is stronger than whatever I have to go through! Sometimes it may be a calamity that thousands are facing together, or it may be a personal battle that no one else even knows you are dealing with. God knows. He knows and He cares. He wants to sustain you in the day-to-day difficulties and guide you through it. His promises are unbreakable, your hope and faith will be unshakable.

In closing, I ask that you meditate on God's word and remind yourself of His message -"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Season's Greetings



Is that really in the Bible?

Deacon Russell Taylor

Greetings All,

Let's have a little fun with "so called" Bible sayings. Test your knowledge. Which of these sayings are really in the Bible. Check **yes** or **no** prior to reading the answer.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Yes _____ No _____

Despite the strict rules given to the Israelites about uncleanness as a metaphor for sinfulness and ceremonial washing required by the priests (see: Exodus, Leviticus), this phrase is not in the Bible. It originated as an ancient Babylonian and Hebrew proverb, but became very popular during the Victorian era after being revived by Sir Francis Bacon and John Wesley. Is the proverb true beyond the metaphor? A new study shows that people are generally fairer and more generous when in a clean-smelling environment. However, Jesus also exhorts us to worry more about the sin in our hearts than the dirt on our hands (*Matthew 7:18-23*).

"Hate the sin, love the sinner."

Yes _____ No _____

Although this is a biblical-sounding admonition, it is not directly from the Bible. It's actually a loose quote of something Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1929, "Hate the sin and not the sinner." Augustine expressed a similar thought back in AD 424: "With love for mankind and hatred of sins." The biblical principle backing this up is found in *Jude 1:22-23*. We are to hate sin - even our own. Also, we are to show love to other people. The "hating sin" part is coming under fire today as more and more people define themselves by their sin and resent the guidelines God has given us in His Word.

"Money is the root of all evil."

Yes _____ No _____

This is a common misconception with an easy fix. *1 Timothy 6:10* actually says, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil..." Money is not good or bad, and being wealthy is not a sin. Job was wealthy and described as a man who was "blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil" (*Job 1:1*). Loving money in Greek is "avarice" and implies an emotional affection, is the root of all sorts of evil as the desire to accumulate wealth is placed above God and others.

"This too shall pass."

Yes _____ No _____

This is actually a misinterpretation of a line from "The Lament of Doer," an Old English poem. Doer has been replaced as his lord's poet, and calls to mind several other Germanic mythological figures who went through troubled times. Each refrain ends with, "that passed away, so may this." Several verses in the Bible reminds us that our lives and, indeed, heaven and earth will pass away (*Matthew 24:35*). However, while we can find comfort knowing that our earthly sorrows are temporary, we're still called to rejoice in our trials, knowing that they will lead to endurance and sanctification (*James 1:2-4*).

continue on page 17

Season's Greetings



continue from page 16

“God helps those who help themselves.”

Yes _____ No _____

Where does the phrase actually come from? Variations are proverbial statements in ancient Greek tragedies. The Quran (13:11) has something similar. An English politician gave us the exact wording, which Benjamin Franklin quotes in Poor Richard's Almanac.

The message of **Romans 5:8** is the exact opposite. While we were still sinners and unable to help ourselves, Christ died for us—proving how much God loves us, how amazing grace is, and how incapable of helping ourselves we truly are.

So, “no harm - no foul”; right? Wrong. Some of these “sayings” are more familiar to Christians than the True Word of God. So, we pass them down from generation to generation which weakens the body of Christ by our testimony. When we know better, let's do better.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Amen, Amen and Amen.

Be Blessed and Merry Christmas.



Greetings From Our House to Your House

Deacon Russell & Deaconess Brenda Taylor

*May the true spirit of Christmas shine in our
Hearts and light your path.*

*Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
John 1:36*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

THE TOWEL

Author Unknown

Submitted by: Deaconess Wynnice Napper

At first glance, it is easy to look at a towel as a most ordinary object. Have you ever stopped to think that for thousands of years, the towel has been used for many wonderful purposes? For example, the mother who wipes the tears of a child, the physician who binds the wounds of a patient, or the woman in her home wiping her hands as she moves from task to task.

Perhaps the most significant use of the towel happened nearly two thousand years ago when our Savior, only hours before He hung on the cross, took an ordinary towel in His loving hands and dried the feet of His disciples. This simple, loving act personifies the selflessness and loving service we seek to give during our lives. It illustrates that an ordinary thing like a towel, in the right hands, and with a giving heart, can lighten another's load. As with every action performed by the Savior on this earth, His act of service reminds us that simple day-to-day kindnesses are the Savior's way to bless and comfort.

This towel is given with love and with the hope you will do works of goodness with it as the Savior did so many years' ago. May the absorbing spirit of the season blot out our problems. Soak up our sorrows, wipe away difficulties, and may your Christmas be shining and bright!



Twas The Night Before Jesus Came

By Dianne Frances Donenfeld
Submitted by: MIT Melissa Monore

³⁶”But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

⁴²Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. - *Matthew 24:36 and 42*

And all through the house not a creature was praying, not one in the house. Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care; In hopes that Jesus would not come there. The children were dressing to crawl into bed, not once ever kneeling or bowing a head. And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap was watching the Late Show while I took a nap. When out of the East there arose such a clatter, I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash; Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash! When what to my wondering eyes should appear but angels proclaiming that Jesus was here. With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray I knew in a moment this must be The Day!

The light of His face made me cover my head; It was Jesus! returning just like He had said. And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth, I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand; Was written the name of every saved man. He spoke not a word as He searched for my name; when He said, “It’s not here” my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love; He gathered to take to His Father above. With those who were ready He rose without a sound while all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late; I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate. I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight; Oh, if only I had been ready tonight. In the words of this poem the meaning is clear; The coming of Jesus is drawing near. There’s only one life and when comes the last call; We’ll find that the Bible was true after all!



THE
Indescribable Gift

by Roy Lessin

Submitted by: Deaconess Wynnice Napper

GOD'S INDESCRIBABLE GIFT is Jesus Christ—All that our **hearts** have ever desired, every **need** we face, every **truth** we seek, and every **blessing** we long for is found in Jesus Christ.

IN HIM we see all that God wants to reveal to us, we **walk** in all God has prepared for us, we **experience** all God has planned for us, and we **receive** all God wants to be to us.

HE IS the **Fountain** that quenches our thirst, the **Bread** that nourishes our souls, the **Light** that dispels our darkness, the **Physician** that heals our wounds, the **Shepherd** that guides our steps, the **Counselor** that gives us wisdom, the **Word** that establishes us in truth, the **Faithful One** that gives us security, the **Door** that gives us access to the Father, and the **Way** that leads us home.

WHAT A **love!** What a **Savior!** What a **gift!**



CHRISTMAS GIFT

by Maureen

Submitted by: Deaconess Wynnice Napper

The gifts I'd leave beneath your tree,
Aren't those that you can touch or see,
Not wrapped in Christmas tissue gay

But gifts to bless you every day

The gift of friendship warm and true

Is one that I would leave for you

Good health and happiness and cheer

To keep you smiling through the year

The gift of peace that comes from God

With prayer to guide each path you trod

And when your heart has lost its song

The gift of hope to cheer you on

These are the gifts I'd leave

for you



True Christian Christmas

By Joanna Fuchs

Submitted By Sister Sylvia Tyson

Christmas isn't showy gifts
or glittering decoration.
It's honoring our Savior, Jesus
Christ in humble adoration.

It's serving those less fortunate,
meeting their needs before our own.
It's making sure at Christmas time
that no one is alone.

It's taking what we would have spent
on things that no one needs,
and using it to help someone
with service and good deeds.

Our Savior showed us how to live
with charity, faith and service.
It makes the Holidays a joy,
more peaceful and less nervous.

So let's remember Christmas is
about our Savior's birth;
that's the way to happiness,
the way to peace on earth..

Let's Eat – Recipe

Butter Pecan Cookies



Prep time: 30 mins Cook time: 15 mins. Chill time: 2 hrs. Total time: 2 hrs 45 mins

Ingredients

For the Butter Pecans

1 1/2 cups chopped pecans

1 1/2 tablespoons butter

For the Brown Butter

1 cup unsalted butter (cut into equal pieces)

For the Cookies

2 cups + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1 cup packed brown sugar

2 large eggs (at room temperature)

2 teaspoons vanilla

pecan halves (to decorate, optional)

Directions

1. Make the butter pecans: In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, sauté the chopped pecans and butter until fragrant and toasted, about 3-4 minutes. Stir frequently and keep an eye on the small crumbs, they will brown quicker than the bigger pieces and you don't want anything to burn. Set aside to cool.

Soft and chewy, these delightful **Butter Pecan Cookies** feature butter pecans and brown butter for a melt-in-your-mouth cookie.

Perfect for holiday cookie platters along with our molasses cookies and eggnog cookies. Or just enjoy them anytime throughout the year with a big glass of milk!

2. Brown the butter: Bring the butter to a strong bubble in a light colored skillet over medium heat (this is ideal so you can actually see when it browns.) Continue cooking, stirring continuously, until the solid particles at the bottom turn golden brown and smell nutty (about 5-8 minutes.) Keep an eye on it – brown butter can turn to burnt butter within seconds. Immediately pour into a large mixing bowl to stop the browning. Let cool slightly, about 10-15 minutes (you want the butter to be warm, but not at all hot or the cookies will spread way too much while baking.)
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt.
4. Whisk the granulated sugar and brown sugar into the cooled brown butter. Then whisk in the eggs and vanilla until thoroughly combined.
5. Add in the dry ingredients and stir until no streaks of flour remain.
6. Stir in the chopped butter pecans.
7. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing the plastic down on the surface of the dough. Chill for 2 hours. (Don't be impatient – they need to chill or the cookies will not bake properly.)
8. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F with a rack in the middle position. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
9. Roll dough into balls (2 tablespoons each) and place on the parchment paper, at least 2-inches apart.
10. Gently press a pecan half onto the top of the unbaked ball of dough.
11. Bake until the edges are set and JUST beginning to turn golden brown, about 9-12 minutes. The tops of the cookies should still be quite soft when you remove them from the oven, and may even appear slightly under-baked in the center. But they will firm up as they cool. This will result in a soft chewy cookie. If you over-bake, they will be dry and crumbly.
12. Let rest on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely.

Recipe by: **Bellyfull.net**

Peppermint Cake with Seven-Minute Frosting



Prep time: 1 hr 20 mins Total time: 2 hrs 40 mins

Ingredients

Cake Layers

2 cups granulated sugar
1 1/4 cups unsalted butter, softened
4 large eggs
2 tablespoons vanilla extract
4 cups unbleached cake flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup whole milk
Shortening, for greasing pans

Peppermint Buttercream

3 cups powdered sugar
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup finely crushed hard peppermint candies (about 20 candies)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 to 2 teaspoons whole milk
2 to 3 drops liquid red food coloring

Seven-Minute Frosting

12 large egg whites
3 cups granulated sugar
3 tablespoons corn syrup
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract

Recipe by: **Southern Living**

Cool peppermint-vanilla cake and fluffy pink buttercream make a merry combination. Finish with whimsical dollops of mint frosting. The cake layers and buttercream can be made ahead to save time.

Directions

1. Prepare the Cake Layers: Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat granulated sugar and butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, and beat just until combined after each addition. Add vanilla, and beat just until combined. Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. Add flour mixture, in batches, alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat on low speed just until blended after each addition. Pour batter into 2 greased (with shortening) and floured 9-inch round cake pans.
2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 28 to 30 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 20 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks, and cool completely, about 30 minutes.
3. Prepare the Peppermint Buttercream: Beat powdered sugar and butter with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add crushed peppermints, vanilla, and salt; beat until blended. Beat in 1 teaspoon of the milk. Beat in up to 1 more teaspoon of milk, 1/4 teaspoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached. Beat in food coloring, 1 drop at a time, until desired color is reached.
4. Prepare the Seven-Minute Frosting: Pour water to a depth of 2 inches into bottom of a saucepan or double boiler; bring to a simmer over medium heat. Stir together egg whites, granulated sugar, corn syrup, and salt in a heatproof bowl or top of double boiler. Place bowl over simmering water, and whisk constantly until sugar dissolves and mixture is hot, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat, and beat with an electric mixer on medium-high until stiff peaks form and mixture is completely cooled, about 10 minutes. Beat in peppermint extract.
5. Assemble Cake: Place 1 Cake Layer on a cake plate. Spread Peppermint Buttercream in an even layer, about 1/2 inch thick, to within 1/2 inch of cake edge. Top with remaining Cake Layer.
6. Spread cooled Seven-Minute Frosting over top and sides of cake. Reserve remaining Frosting for garnish

Garnish How-To:

Prepare the candy: Roughly crush 1 cup hard peppermint candies into small pieces. Crush an additional 1/4 cup candies into fine pieces and set aside. Add 1 tsp. white Disco Dust to 1 cup crushed candy, and stir to combine.

Decorate the cake: Spoon the remaining Seven-Minute Frosting into a ziplock plastic bag, and snip 1 corner of the bag. Pipe swirls of frosting on the top of the cake. Lightly press the Disco Dust-coated crushed candy into the sides of the frosted cake until the sides of the cake are coated. Sprinkle the piped swirls with the finely crushed candy and an additional 1/2 tsp. Disco Dust.

Buche de Noel



Prep time: 25 mins Total time: 1 hrs 35 mins

Ingredients

Cooking spray

4 large eggs

3/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon + a pinch table salt, divided

3/4 cup + 3 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 tablespoons + 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar (sifted), divided

1/2 cup hot strong brewed coffee

2 cups sweetened whipped cream

1/3 cup boiling water

1 tablespoon instant coffee granules

3 (1-oz.)s unsweetened chocolate squares, chopped

1/2 cup unsalted butter

Candied cherries

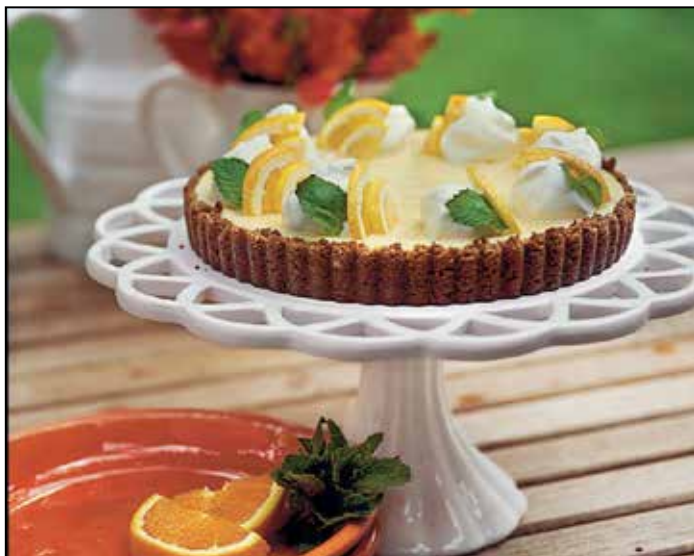
Literally translated, the name of this recipe means “yule log.” This traditional French Christmas cake is shaped and decorated to resemble a wooden log and often garnished with meringue “mushrooms” or “moss” made from chopped pistachio nuts. It may look impressive but making a roulade or jelly roll is easy if you follow the steps.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat a 15- x 10- x 1-inch jellyroll pan with cooking spray; line with wax paper, and coat with cooking spray. Beat eggs, baking powder, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt with a hand mixer on medium-high speed until combined, about 30 seconds. Gradually add 3/4 cup of the granulated sugar, beating until thick and light colored, about 4 minutes. Fold in flour, cocoa, and vanilla. Spread batter evenly into prepared jellyroll pan. Bake in preheated oven until cake surface springs back when gently pressed, about 12 minutes.
2. Sift 3 tablespoons of the powdered sugar in a 15- x 10-inch rectangle on a clean linen towel. Turn cake out onto sugar-coated towel; remove wax paper from cake. Trim crisp cake edges, if needed. Starting with the short end, carefully roll up cake and towel together, jellyroll style. Let cool completely on a wire rack, seam side down, about 1 hour.
3. Unroll cake; remove towel. Stir together hot brewed coffee and remaining 3 tablespoons granulated sugar in a small bowl until dissolved; brush mixture over cake. Spread with whipped cream, and reroll (without towel). Chill 30 minutes.
4. Stir together boiling water and instant coffee granules in a small heatproof bowl until dissolved. Melt chopped chocolate in the top of a double boiler; stir in butter, dissolved instant coffee mixture, and remaining pinch of salt until smooth. Remove from heat, and let cool until lukewarm, about 30 minutes. Stir in remaining 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar until a smooth, spreadable consistency is reached.
5. Spread chocolate frosting evenly over chilled cake. Score frosting with a spatula or fork tines to resemble bark of a tree. Garnish cake with candied cherries. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 3 days before serving.

Recipe by: **Southern Living**

Double Citrus Tart



Prep time: 1 hr 20 mins Total time: 2 hrs 40 mins

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups crushed gingersnap cookies
 - 5 tablespoons butter, melted
 - 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
 - 1/3 cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
 - 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
 - 2 large eggs, separated
 - 1 cup heavy whipping cream
 - 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- Garnishes: fresh mint leaves, lemon and orange slices

Easy as icebox pie, this party-pretty tart pairs the bright fresh flavors of lemon and orange with a crisp gingersnap crust. It's just the right finish for a rich holiday meal, and freezes beautifully.

Directions

1. Stir together first 4 ingredients. Press mixture evenly into a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom; set aside.
2. Whisk together sweetened condensed milk, orange juice concentrate, lemon juice, and egg yolks until blended.
3. Beat egg whites at medium speed with an electric mixer until stiff peaks form; fold into condensed milk mixture. Pour into prepared crust.
4. Bake at 325° for 20 to 25 minutes or just until filling is set. Remove to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Cover and chill at least 4 hours. Remove tart from pan, and place on a serving dish.
5. Beat whipping cream and granulated sugar at medium speed with an electric mixer until stiff peaks form. Dollop around edges of tart; garnish, if desired.

Recipe by: **Southern Living**

Religious Christmas Word Search



WORD LIST

ANGELS	GABRIEL	MANGER	NATIVITY	STABLE
BETHLEHEM	JESUS CHRIST	MARY	PROPHECY	STAR
FRANKINCENSE	JOSEPH	MYRRH	SHEPHERD	WISEMEN

Name That Christmas Song

1. "Gone away is the bluebird, here to stay is a new bird"

2. "It doesn't show signs of stopping, and I brought some corn for popping"

3. "Please have snow and mistletoe, and presents under the tree"

4. "Hang a shining star upon the highest bough"

5. "You better watch out, you better not cry:"

6. "City sidewalks, busy sidewalks, dressed in holiday style"

7. "'Tis the season to be jolly"

8. "Everyone's dancing merrily in a new old fashioned way"

9. "What a bright time, it's the right time, to rock the night away"

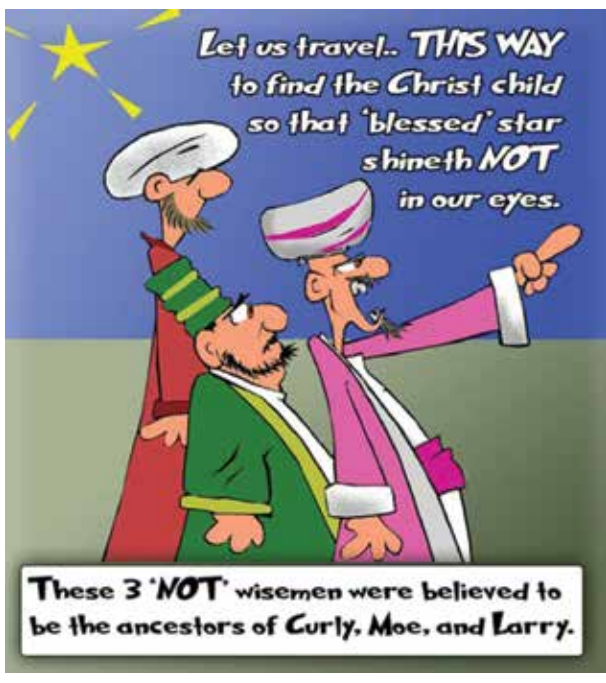
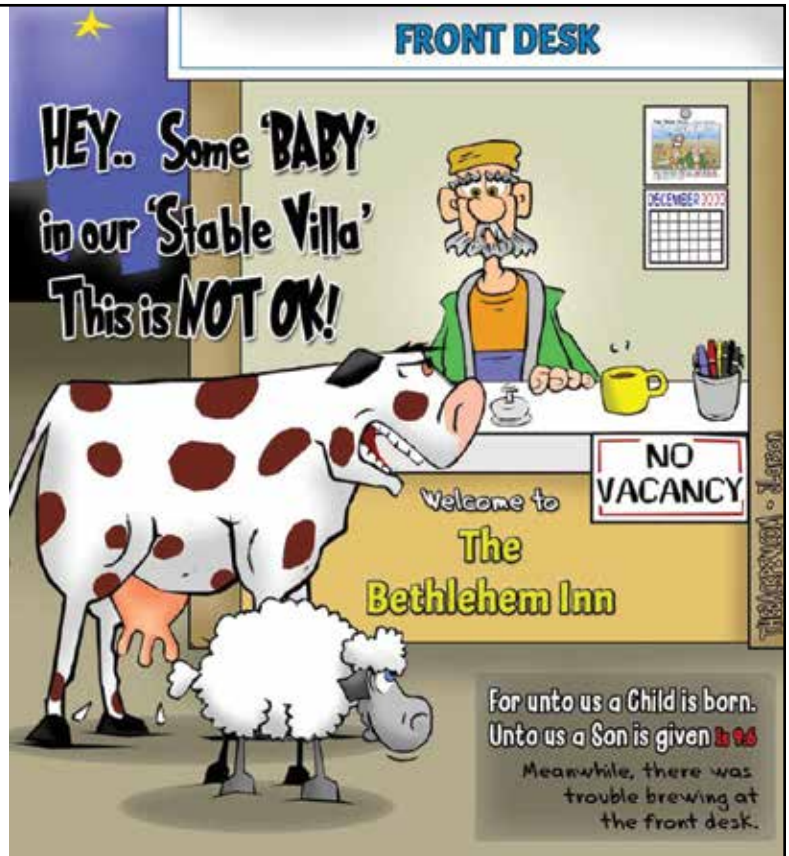
10. "Then one foggy Christmas Eve, Santa came to say"

11. "With a corncob pipe and a button nose"

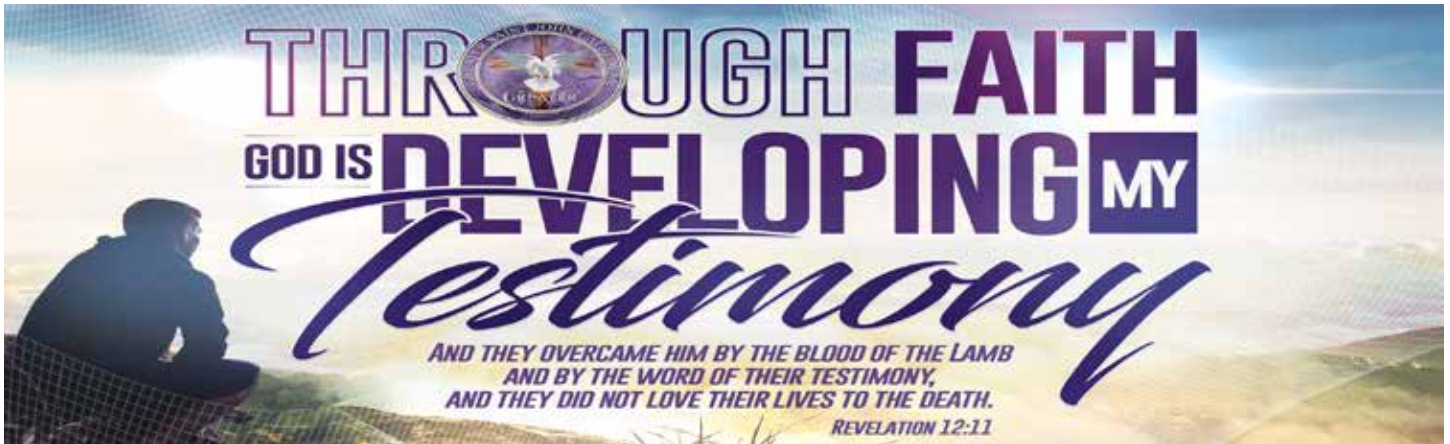
12. "Right down Santa Claus lane"

answers on page 30

FUN ZONE



THEME FOR 2021



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THINK ON THIS:

May your hearth be warm, your Holidays grand, and your heart held gently in the good Lord's hand." — *Unknown*

"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it." — *Pope Francis*

"Christmas is forever, not for just one day. For loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away." — *Norman Wesley Brooks*

"Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you." — *Steve Maraboli*

Answers for page 28

1. Winter Wonderland 2. Let It Snow 3. I'll Be Home For Christmas 4. Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas 5. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town 6. Silver Bells 7. Deck the Halls 8. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree 9. Jingle Bell Rock 10. Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer 11. Frosty The Snowman 12. Here Comes Santa Claus

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to proclaim the Good News of the gospel and teach godly principles for a Greater Life.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to have an abundantly blessed ministry that is both Supernatural and Spirit Filled.