

Beacon of Light

October—December 2022 • Volume 5 • Issue 4

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12



Pastor's Corner

"O Magnify the Lord"

*And Mary said,
 "My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has looked with favor on
 the lowliness of his servant.
 Surely, from now on all
 generations will call me blessed;
 for the Mighty One has done
 great things for me,
 and holy is his name." (Luke 1:46-49)*

These are the opening verses of that part of scripture known as the "Magnificat." **(Luke 1:46-55)** In the "Magnificat" (Latin for "My soul magnifies the Lord") Mary has just now received confirmation from her cousin Elizabeth that the child she is carrying is the Son of God. Mary, having first been visited by the archangel Gabriel months earlier with the promise of God's selection of her as the mother of the Messiah, breaks out in unconcealed praise; this after Elizabeth reveals the child Elizabeth is carrying leaps with joy when a greeting is passed between the two pregnant women.

Continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue	
Pastor's Corner	Page 1
Inspirational Thoughts and Encouragement	Page 3
Kidz Corner	Page 4
Keeping You Informed	Page 7
➤ Ebenezer, The Church Family that Never Stops Giving	Page 7
➤ A Published Author in Our Midst	Page 8
➤ 10 Foods to Help Relieve Stress	Page 8
➤ Keep Your Mind Young and Sharp	Page 10
➤ Habits that are Good For the Brain	Page 12
➤ Tension Headaches and Migraines	Page 15
➤ U.S. Post Office to Hike Postal Rates in January	Page 17
Birthdays & Anniversaries	Page 19-20
From the Newsletter Editor	Page 21

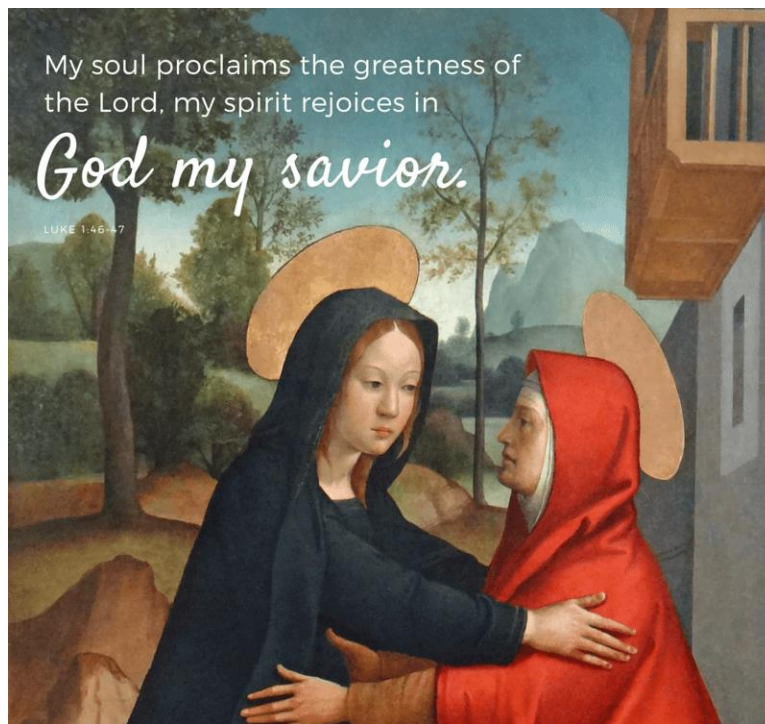
Pastor's Corner (continued from page 1)

Mary's joy arises from the fact that God, in selecting her to be the mother of Jesus, has chosen an otherwise obscure, low-ranking person for such a virtuous honor. She acknowledges the blessings on her conveyed in God's recognition of her for this seismic moment. When Gabriel's earlier promise is confirmed in her cousin Elizabeth's greeting, her joy is palpable in this passage referred to as the "Magnificat."

And yet, as almost unspeakable as Mary's joy is, it is a joy available to all who would receive, once again, in this holy Christmas season, the blessings conveyed in the gift of a Savior. In similar measure, what God has done for Mary, God has also done for us. In gifting us with a Savior, God has looked with favor on the "lowliness" of us all and given us a gift far beyond measure. And, like Mary, for those who choose to acknowledge and accept this great gift, generations will, no doubt, come to know us as "blessed" on account of the favor God has chosen to bestow.

May we all, in this new Christmas season and beyond, once again join with Mary in highest praise for this great thing God has done in gifting us with the favor of a Savior, for whom our soul can without reservation "magnify the Lord."

Merry Christmas & God's Shalom,
Pastor Mark D. Venson



Inspirational Thoughts and Encouragement

Knowing God Is What Matters Most

Source: Daily Hope



“Everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8 (NLT)

You’re never going to become a friend of God in your spare time. To become his friend, you have to make knowing him your number one priority.

Are you doing that? Are you seeking God with all your heart every day?

Remember: You are as close to God as you choose to be. You’re going to become a friend of

God only when you decide you want to become a friend of God.

If you feel far from God, guess who moved? You did. You can’t blame anyone else. You can’t blame your spouse, your parents, or your kids. It’s you who didn’t make him the number one priority of your life.

Knowing and loving God is humanity’s greatest privilege. And being known and being loved by God is our greatest pleasure.

I’ve noticed that you can tell what’s important to people by what they brag about. If their kids are most important, they brag about their kids. If their job is the most important thing in their life, they brag about their job. If travel and having experiences are most important, that’s what they talk about. If partying or buying new clothes is what you talk about most, guess what you value most? You brag about what you value most.

God says in Jeremiah 9:23-24, *“The wise should not boast of their wisdom, nor the strong of their strength, nor the rich of their wealth. If any want to boast, they should boast that they know and understand me”* (GNT).

Knowing God is what matters most—it’s what life is all about. The God of the universe loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. And getting close to him will give you peace and perspective. That’s good news!

Talk It Over

- How do you need to re-prioritize your life so that getting to know God better is your number one priority?
- Based on what you talk about most, what would people say is most important to you?
- What you brag about is what’s most important to you. How can you boast about your relationship with God in your everyday conversations?



KIDZ Corner



CALENDAR OF FELLOWSHIP AND FUN!!

PAST

Harvest Goodie Bags: We hope all the children enjoyed their Harvest Goodie Bags. The Children's Ministry provided Harvest Goodie Bags full of candy, snacks, and treats for all children and youth.

Harvest Field Trip: We had a fabulous time visiting Gaver's Farm in Mt. Airy, MD on Sunday, October 30th. We enjoyed hay rides, looking for the perfect pumpkin in the pumpkin patch, the corn maze, and sipping apple cider slushes!



FUTURE

Christmas Goodie Bags: The Children's and Youth Ministry team will be delivering Christmas Goodie Bags the week of December 19th.

Happy New Year's Virtual Party: It is our goal to host a virtual party on Zoom on **Friday, December 30th**. Stay tuned for more information.

Sunday School: We will begin holding virtual Sunday School in January 2023. Virtual Sunday school is held via Zoom on Sunday's at 1:00 PM. Send a note to: aattware@aol.com if you want to participate! Stay tuned for emails!!

Fun at Gaver's Farm, Mt Airy, Maryland

Ebenezer Children's and Youth Ministry traveled to Gaver's Farm on October 30th to enjoy a full day of harvest fun and fellowship!! This trip was our first in person event since March 2020 when the pandemic hit. The day was beautiful, almost 70 degrees, with sunshine and blue skies; 15 participants traveled by bus to the farm.

On the way to the Farm, we enjoyed Sunday School on the bus. Robert Neal provided the opening prayer, we sang praise songs and each participant shared things that made them happy and some of the activities and ways they stayed busy and had fun during the pandemic.

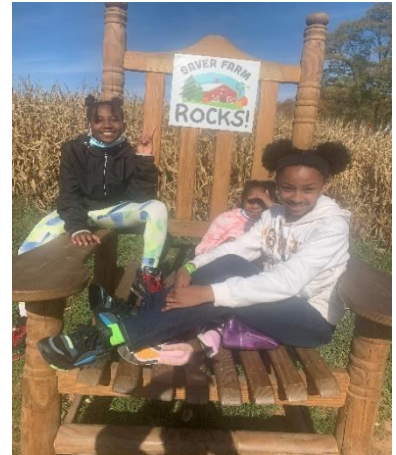


Sis Taylor Ware shared a sermonette from the "becampaign.org". The goal of the "BE" campaign is to help make the world more like the kingdom of God, one interaction at a time. Specifically, we are all asked to love our neighbors, pursue justice, practice kindness and act with humility. **Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Micah 6:8**

The children were reminded that even though friends and people they know may act in a mean or ugly way, God wants us to love and show kindness. Shine bright, remain positive, and love.

Please enjoy a few pictures from our awesome day at Gaver Farm!!!!





Keeping You Informed

EBENEZER, the Church Family that Never Stops Giving!

“Giving is not just about making a donation, it is about making a difference.”

Despite 2 years of COVID and Worship restraints (constraints), the Ebenezer church family has maintained, if not increased its community outreach! From the beginning of the COVID crisis, we reached out to provide support to our adopted school of 20+ years, James McHenry Elementary School, one of 90 plus “Community Schools” in Prince George’s County. Additionally, we paired with Heart to Hand, a non-profit organization that provides support for families, impacted by HIV.

The year 2022 has been no different. In fact, our giving has reached a higher level. We started the school year by participating in James McHenry’s “Community Day” in August. Thanks to the generous donations provided by our church families, we handed out school supplies, consisting of backpacks, notebooks, pens, pencils, crayons, sanitary supplies, and 75+ beautifully designed handmade face masks that caught the attention of parents, students, and teachers alike. Parents and students waited in line patiently to select from our cache of backpacks.

In November, we provided Thanksgiving gift cards for four “homeless” families as a last minute request by the James McHenry Community School Coordinator.

In December, we participated in James McHenry’s, “Cougar” Winter Coat Drive and Supplies.” Our goal was 20 coats of different sizes for children to adults. THE GOAL WAS EXCEEDED! Because of YOU, our Giving Church family, including our United Methodist Men and United Women of Faith, we donated 40 coats of all colors and sizes and dozens of hygiene items, toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

Also, in December we adopted 6 families in our partnership with Heart to Hand. The families consisted of 7 adults and 9 children. Their “Wish List” included video games, LOL dolls, a Spiderman watch, Legos, puzzles, jewelry, Game Stop gift cards, arts and crafts games, action figures, perfume, and shoes and clothes. We were able—again thanks to you our Church Family—to provide Target gift cards for all of the adults and gift cards and requested items for the children.

Our 2022 year of sharing ends with our gifts to UMCOR for Ukraine and a monetary gift to the “King George VI Memorial Home (commonly called the old people’s home) in Sierra Leone.”

We share with you a few pics of the coats donated and the gifts and gift cards purchased.

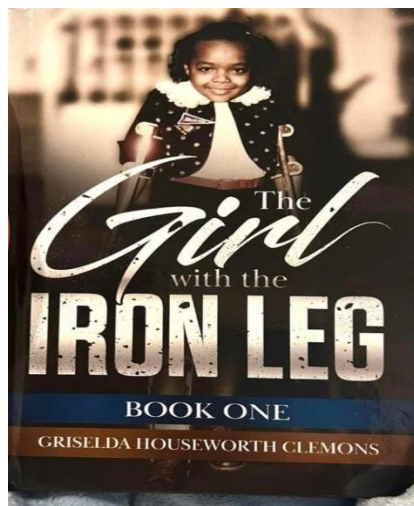


Church Family, what a YEAR OF GIVING!

Submitted by Sis. Eddimae Tisdale



A Published Author In Our Midst



Our very own Sis. Griselda Clemons has written and published her first book, **“The Girl With the Iron Leg,”** a story of Griselda’s life. A few of Ebenezer’s members have already read the book. She is currently in the process of finishing Book Two, which should be out early next year, 2023.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy, Sis. Clemons has 8 copies available and can be mailed or picked up. The book is on sale for \$25.00 payable by cash app (\$GriseldaClemons42), ZELLE (703-626-3846), cash, or check. Griselda can be reached via phone at 301-341-1429. The book can also be purchased from Amazon, [www.amazon.com/books/The Girl With the Iron Leg](http://www.amazon.com/books/The_Girl_With_the_Iron_Leg)

Here is a sampling of reviews that appeared on Amazon.com: *Precocious Child Meets Extreme Challenge; A Young Girl’s Whirlwind Journey; A Must Read; A Wonderful Story of Bravery; We See You; Inspirational; Will have you captured in your reading.*

Submitted by Sis. Griselda Clemons



10 Foods to Help Relieve Stress

Source: Nissa Simon, AARP

Try these to help calm you and improve your mood.



University. You need calming foods that relieve stress and improve your mood. Here are 10 of them.

What you eat has a great deal to do with how you feel, notes nutrition scientist Penny M. Kris-Etherton. “When you’re under stress, you may crave a glazed doughnut dipped in sprinkles — but tempting as it is, it won’t help your spirits and will probably leave you feeling grumpy and fatigued,” says Kris-Etherton, professor of nutritional sciences at Penn State

1. Sweet Potatoes. These orange gems are rich in complex carbohydrates that stimulate the brain to produce serotonin, a type of chemical that can serve as a mood stabilizer. Researchers note that compounds in sweet potatoes help lower levels of the hormone cortisol, which is involved in regulating the body's response to stress. Sweet potatoes are also rich in magnesium, often considered one of the best minerals for promoting calmness and improving mood.

2. Spinach. This leafy green is a good source of magnesium, a mineral associated with reduced levels of stress and anxiety. In addition, the leaves are rich in vitamin C, which the body can't produce on its own. A lack of C has been linked to increased stress levels. Spinach also contains abundant amounts of folate, also called vitamin B9, as do kale, broccoli, and cauliflower. Folate stimulates the production of dopamine, a brain chemical that helps brain cells communicate with each other. Use these nutrient-rich veggies in salads or as raw snacks — cooking can deplete some of their benefits.

3. Avocados. The pale-green flesh found beneath a tough shell is a good source of a family of B vitamins that play a role in producing brain chemicals to reduce stress and boost mood. Some of these naturally occurring chemicals also help prevent anxiety and relieve irritability. In addition, avocados provide lutein, a nutrient important for both brain health and eye health. Lutein improves memory as well as problem-solving ability. Avocados contain unsaturated fat, the kind usually called good fat because it can help improve blood cholesterol levels and stabilize heart rhythms. Serve avocado chunks in a colorful salad or mash the pulp for a buttery spread.

4. Winter Squash. All types of winter squash, including fall favorites such as pumpkin, butternut, acorn, delicata, and Hubbard, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for brain health as well as heart health. Part of a family of polyunsaturated fats, omega-3s help protect against the devastating effects of chronic stress, which can damage the region of the brain responsible for memory. For an added treat, clean the seeds of pulp in cool water, pat them dry and roast them with some olive oil and a bit of salt.

5. Yellow Bell Peppers. Although oranges are considered the go-to food for vitamin C, yellow bell peppers contain almost twice as much of this vital nutrient and less than half the sugar. Vitamin C supports the immune system and helps regulate levels of cortisol, the hormone the body releases when under stress. Bell peppers tend to dry out easily; store them in the vegetable compartment of your fridge, and include a damp paper towel to help prevent moisture loss.

6. Black-Eyed Peas. Eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day is said to bring good luck, but they do far more than that; these beauties benefit you throughout the year. Actually a pale beige bean with a noticeable black spot, black-eyed peas and their relatives — lentils, soybeans, lima beans, and peanuts — are rich in nerve-soothing thiamine (vitamin B1). Thiamine is sometimes called an anti-stress vitamin because it strengthens the immune system and bolsters the body's ability to withstand stress. Cooks debate the necessity of soaking black-eyed peas before cooking (canned black-eyed peas don't need to be soaked). Whether you do or not, spread the dried beans on a baking sheet, toss out the shriveled ones and any bits of grit, and you're good to go.

7. Eggs. Whether you choose to serve them soft-boiled, hard-cooked, scrambled, or coddled, eggs benefit your brain and nervous system. People under stress often feel irritable, angry, and fatigued. Here's where the humble egg comes in. An egg yolk is packed with more than 20 percent of the daily recommended amount of tryptophan, an amino acid needed to produce serotonin. In turn, serotonin, a chemical that carries messages between nerve cells in the brain, seems to ease stress and promote a feeling of calm, notes an article in the journal *Nutritional Neuroscience*. Bonus: Egg yolks are also a stellar source of vitamin D, linked to protecting against memory loss and forgetfulness.

8. Beets. Feeling edgy and stressed? Reach for a serving of magnesium-rich beets to add to your plate. Magnesium helps increase levels of serotonin, a brain chemical that plays a major role in regulating mood. A shortfall of serotonin can cause anxiety, fatigue, and irritability. According to an article in the journal *Nutrients*, symptoms of magnesium deficiency are similar to those of stress. Stress can cause magnesium loss and, in turn, a magnesium deficiency could increase the body's susceptibility to stress. To prepare beets, boil, steam, or roast them, and don't bother peeling. Choose either red or golden beets; they provide the same benefits.

9. Broccoli. This fast-growing annual vegetable is a great source of vitamin C. In fact, broccoli outranks oranges by 2 to 1 in the C department: 100g of cooked broccoli has nearly twice as much C as 100g of an orange. Why is C important? A lack of this vitamin has been linked to increased levels of stress. In addition, although it doesn't make the top list of magnesium-rich foods, broccoli supplies a creditable amount of this mineral. A shortage of magnesium could make the body less able to withstand the effects of stress.

10. Almonds. Grab a handful of almonds before you rush out the door in the morning. Your day may be more stress-free than you expected. Almonds are a rich source of B vitamins, which help the body manage stress. Eat them either with or without the skins; the choice is yours. Tired of almonds? Swap them out for pistachios or walnuts. Both can help ease your racing heart when you're under pressure. Whichever nuts you choose, if you are watching your weight, remember to limit yourself to just a handful a day because they're all high in calories.



Keep Your Mind Young and Sharp

Source: WebMD

Give Your Life a Soundtrack. Your brain gets a mental workout when you stream your favorite playlist. Not only can listening to music help you feel more alert, but it also can boost your memory and mood. One reason is that there's a math to music and how one note relates to the other. Your brain has to work to make sense of this structure. This is especially true for music you're hearing for the first time.

Make Time to Make Friends. Getting to know new people boosts your brain's "executive function" as much as doing a crossword puzzle. This set of mental skills includes your short-term memory, the power to tune out distractions, and the ability to stay focused. How does a friendly 10-minute chat help? Listening to someone else's point of view and trying to put yourself in their shoes pushes your brain to think in new ways.

Laugh It Off. Stress can make your brain release a hormone called cortisol, which makes it hard to think clearly. Over time, high levels of stress can cause trouble with your learning and memory. A fun way to protect your brain is to have a good laugh. It can lower cortisol levels and help keep your brain healthy.

Get Outside. Nature has a calming effect and can ease stress -- even if you're just looking out a window. When you spend time outdoors, you give your brain a rest from the constant flow of data and stimulus it gets throughout the day. This lets it reboot its ability to focus, so you may feel more creative and better able to solve problems.

Ditch Your Routine. There's nothing wrong with eating the same breakfast every day or driving the same route to work. Humans are creatures of habit. But it's good for your brain to try to mix things up. Even once a week can help. A change in routine boosts your brain's ability to learn new info and hold onto it. Try out a new recipe or explore a different part of your city.

Become a Student Again. When you learn a new skill or subject, your brain makes new pathways between its many cells. You might try your hand at creative writing or a new hobby that interests you, like quilting or playing the guitar. If it seems hard at first, don't give up. The tougher it is for you to get the hang of it, the better for your brain.

Focus on One Thing at a Time. Just because you can text, watch TV, and check your social media feed at the same time doesn't mean it's good for you. When your brain is hit with several streams of info at once, it has to sift through it all. This makes it harder for you to focus, manage your memory, and switch from one thing to another. Go easy on your brain and give one thing your full attention at a time.

Meditate. Whether you say a mantra or just focus on breathing, meditation can help with high blood pressure or high cholesterol. (Both can raise your chances of Alzheimer's.) Studies show it also can boost your focus, memory, and ability to choose words, and it can make it easier to switch from one thought to another. The reasons for this aren't clear, but one theory is that meditation gives your brain a break from concrete words and thoughts.

Break a Sweat. Working out is as good for your brain as it is for your body. Exercise keeps your reasoning and thinking skills sharp because it ramps up the blood flow to your brain, along with certain chemicals that help protect it. Try to get moving every other day for at least 30 minutes.

Give It a Rest. If you don't get enough sleep, even a simple task can take more mental effort than it would otherwise. You'll also find it much harder to focus, and you may notice gaps in your short-term memory. To stay fresh, aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

Watch What You Eat. The more calories you take in, the higher your chances of memory loss may be. The reason isn't clear-cut, but a greater BMI (body mass index) at middle age is linked to poor brain health later in life. Small changes, like switching from whole milk to skim, will help you cut down on calories. Your doctor or a dietitian can help you with a plan that's right for you.

Feed Your Brain. Certain foods work hard to protect your brain. These include fruits, veggies, legumes, fish, and "good" fats like the ones in canola and olive oils. A daily cup of tea or coffee also can help your brain wake up. But watch the processed foods--which can wreak havoc on your blood sugar.

Stop Smoking. Many chemicals in cigarettes are toxic to your brain, so you might not be surprised to learn that smoking's linked to mental decline and dementia. And the same goes for secondhand smoke. Talk to others in your family about quitting, too. You'll all stay healthier if your house and car are smoke-free.

Take Care of Your Heart. If your heart's in poor health, you're more likely to have learning and memory problems. Being overweight and not getting enough exercise can make your blood vessels narrow. This limits the amount of blood that flows to your brain, and your arteries may start to harden. High blood pressure is the biggest sign that your brain's health is at risk. If yours is high, talk with your doctor about how to control it.

Get Help for Your Mental Health. If you're depressed, you may be more likely to have a mental decline. In addition to feelings of helplessness and losing interest in things you love; depression also can put you in a "brain fog." Thinking, staying focused, and making decisions can be much harder. If you have some of these signs, talk to your doctor about what you can do to treat them.



Habits That Are Good for the Brain—and How to Make Them Stick

Knowledge is power, but commitment is key when it comes to making brain-boosting changes



Despite common misconceptions, a weakening brain is not an inevitable part of aging. It's true that the brain changes with age, but just like other parts of the body — be it your heart or your joints — taking good care of it along the way can help prevent or delay disease and decline. In fact, everyday habits like exercise and eating right can lower risks for memory loss and other symptoms of cognitive decline, research suggests. Studies

have also found that managing blood pressure and blood sugar can benefit the brain — the same goes for sleep and social engagement.

“It's empowering to know that we can take steps to support the health of our brains as we age,” says Sarah Lenz Lock, AARP senior vice president for policy and brain health and executive director of the Global Council on Brain Health. “But knowing is only half the battle. Committing to living a healthy lifestyle is key to keeping our brains and bodies as sharp as possible throughout adulthood.”

8 Behaviors That Can Benefit the Brain

1. Stay socially engaged
2. Quit smoking
3. Find ways to stimulate your brain
4. Manage stress
5. Stay physically active
6. Get enough sleep (aim for at least seven hours)
7. Eat a healthy diet
8. Control blood pressure and blood sugar levels

Source: Global Council on Brain Health/CDC

Adopting brain-boosting behaviors. Breaking old habits and adopting new ones is not always an easy feat, and the proof is in the numbers. Modifiable behaviors and choices — smoking when we know the dangers, or avoiding exercise when we know its benefits — cause up to half of all early deaths in the U.S., data shows. When it comes to the brain, a 2020 report from the Lancet Commission estimates that modifiable risk factors, like physical inactivity and excessive alcohol consumption, account for a significant share of global dementia cases.

While change can be a challenge, experts on the topic, including AARP's Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH), have some tips on how to overcome common hurdles.

Set a goal (and keep it realistic). Identifying the specific action you want to take — and why it's important to you — is the first step to behavior change, according to a new GCBH report on the topic. It's important to keep these goals realistic, says George Rebok, a psychologist and professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who develops community-based interventions to prevent age-related cognitive decline and reduce dementia risk.

As tempting as it may be to shoot for the stars, even motivated individuals are less likely to attempt a change if they think they can't achieve it or that it won't work, the GCBH report explains. Attainable goals, however, can build confidence and momentum. So set your sights on something that's manageable and "find ways to really incorporate that into your day to day life," Rebok says.

Find something that is enjoyable for you. It helps if your goal is less chore-like and, instead, is built around something you enjoy, says Ayelet Fishbach, a professor of behavioral science and marketing at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and the author of *Get It Done: Surprising Lessons From the Science of Motivation*. The reason: "If you pick something that's not enjoyable, you're not going to stay with it," Rebok adds.

For example, if you want to exercise more but don't enjoy going to a gym, explore dancing or walking with friends. Yoga and tai chi also pack brain-boosting benefits. Want to learn a new skill to challenge your brain? No need for complicated math problems (unless you find them fun); learning how to cook or mastering a musical instrument counts. So does volunteering.

"There's this misconception that we have to do something complicated," Rebok says. While it's important to challenge yourself to some degree, "a lot of times very simple interventions make a big difference."

Take a step-by-step approach. Start slow and keep track of your progress. As things become easier, "keep challenging yourself, keep trying to improve," Rebok says. And don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments along the way. Recognizing even small achievements can help cement your commitment, especially in the beginning stages.

Consider repurposing some of your free time. Not everyone is flush with free time, but many Americans have hours of it each day, and much of it is spent in front of screens. So swap a sedentary behavior for a healthier one, the GCBH suggests. Instead of scrolling social media, use that time to socialize with friends. Listening to a book or a podcast while you exercise will keep you entertained and active.

Anticipate obstacles. Another key part of behavior-change success is anticipating obstacles. “When you make a plan to do something, think about what might be in your way,” says Fishbach, who helped to formulate behavior change recommendations in the GCBH report. “We find that when people prepare for an obstacle, it’s like preparing to lift something that’s heavy — your body is actually physically and mentally getting ready to lift this heavy thing.”

For example, if you’re going to be in a place where there’s going to be a lot of alcohol and you are working to limit your intake, it’s easier to stick to your goal if you consider that temptation in advance, Fishbach explains. Will out-of-town travel throw a wrench into your exercise routine? “Thinking about that in advance is often half the battle,” she adds. It helps you anticipate ways to overcome the challenges.

Get support from friends and family. Just like children have teachers, coaches, and caregivers to cheer them on when they learn new things, adults need a support system, too, Rebok says. “I think there needs to be more of what we call ‘scaffolding’ for our efforts to improve our brain health,” he adds.

So find a buddy who will join you for workouts or for brain-stimulating activities. And inform friends and family of your goals so they can help hold you accountable.

“If you want to change your diet, you have a much better chance if you live with people who are on board with that change. If you want to introduce an exercise, you have a better chance if the people around you [support your goal]. If you don’t have social support, we find that it is much harder,” Fishbach says.

A few other tips: Don’t let setbacks set you back. Instead, learn from your failures — they can help highlight what works and what doesn’t and “may help motivate you to not lose your previous progress and bear down to cross the finish line,” the GCBH says in its report.

Also, consider using the beginning of a new year, new month, or new week as an opportunity to set new goals. There’s nothing like a fresh start. “Choose that one healthy thing you can do today to support your brain. Do it today, and if you find you like it, try it again,” Lock says. “Soon you will be on your way toward living that brain-healthy lifestyle that can make a real difference as you age.”



Tension Headaches and Migraines: How to Prevent and Treat Head Pain

Source: Ella Akkerman, MD

A recent study found that on any given day, nearly 16 percent of the world's population has a headache. The same study, published in the *Journal of Headache and Pain*, found that more than 50 percent of the world's population has a headache disorder.

The most common type of headache?

Tension headaches. Given the prevalence of headaches, I want patients to understand that there are steps they can take to prevent them – and that preventing headaches from occurring is the best way to manage them.

Tension Headaches vs. Migraines. As the study reported, and as I see in my own practice, tension headaches are the most common type of headache, followed by migraine headaches. There are some key differences between tension headaches and migraines.

Tension headaches are head pains that typically come on gradually and slowly.

Patients with tension headaches may have pain in the back of the head, the front of the head, or the side of the head. Many describe the pain as a steady tightness on the head.

Tension headaches last between 30 minutes and a few hours. Usually, rest, relaxation, and sleep are the best medicine. Over-the-counter pain relievers such as aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen also can be helpful. Patients can take pain relievers anytime throughout the course of a headache and likely will start feeling better quickly. Most people can work through tension headaches.

Tension headaches are not usually associated with other neurological symptoms, such as dizziness, confusion, nausea, or light sensitivity, though some people are sensitive to noise when they have tension headaches.

By contrast, patients with migraine headaches may suffer nausea, noise sensitivity, and light sensitivity. Though migraines tend to affect just one side of the head, often behind one eye, some people with them feel pain on both sides. Many describe the pain as intense throbbing.

Migraines also tend to last longer than tension headaches, from a few hours to a few days. Patients suffering from a migraine usually have pain so severe they must stop their work and other activities.

There are specific medications designed to treat migraine headaches, including over-the-counter pain relievers. We also can prescribe pain relievers designed to prevent or treat migraines. I encourage people with migraines to take medications as soon as the headache begins. If patients wait until the pain is severe, many medications won't work. Both tension and migraine headaches are considered chronic if patients have headaches for 15 or more days per month.

Causes of and Prevention Strategies for Tension Headaches. Stress is one of the most common causes of tension headaches. To some people, stress is having to wake up early or go to bed late. Or stress can be caused by commuting to the office or financial problems. Challenges with work and family relationships are also stressors for millions of people. Managing stress is a keyway to prevent tension headaches. Kaiser Permanente members have no-cost access to apps such as Calm, myStrength and Ginger to help manage stress. Yoga, meditation, and exercise can also help.

I encourage my patients to be in tune with their own emotional and physical well-being and to learn what makes them feel good. Being self-aware and treating your body kindly are vital to preventing headaches. Know what your body likes and what your body doesn't like. And understand what the body and mind need: hydration, good nutrition, adequate, restful sleep, and physical activity. Some people need more sleep than others, some need more water, and some need more frequent meals. Take care of your body to lower stress. Doing so will prevent headaches.

Muscle tension is another cause of tension headaches. Take, for example, how you may feel driving behind someone going slowly on the highway. You may tense your upper body and neck. Next thing you know, you may have a tension headache.

Eye strain and poor posture while looking at computer or cell phone screens can cause muscle tension and headaches. Place your screen at eye level. I also recommend taking breaks from screens, getting up and moving around, and having good posture and a good ergonomic setup.

Other causes of tension headaches include:

- Wearing eyeglasses that are too tight or aren't the right prescription. Make sure your lens prescription is up to date.
- Grinding teeth at night.
- Skipping meals, which can lead to low blood sugar. Eat regularly to avoid this problem.
- Withdrawing from caffeine. If you regularly drink coffee, try not to skip it. Caffeine withdrawal commonly causes tension headaches.
- Overusing analgesics. When people frequently take medication, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or opiates, to treat headaches, the brain starts craving more pain relievers. It's a bad cycle because the pain relievers will become less effective, and you will feel that you need more and more medication to treat even a mild headache. And you'll have even more headaches. These are known as rebound headaches; using pain relievers more than three times a week for two to three weeks can lead to this problem.

Lifestyle Ways to Treat Tension Headaches. Here are some strategies that may help when you feel a tension headache come on:

- Massage your scalp. Put your fingertips on your scalp and rub in a circular pattern, going slowly around the back of the head and neck area, then moving to the temples and the front. Gently massage your neck and shoulders. Gently rotate your head to the left, right, front, and back.
- Try shoulder rolls. Stretch your arms and legs.
- Apply heat. The heat helps muscles relax. A warm shower or warm compress on a sore or tense muscle of the neck or shoulders can help prevent tension headaches. Once the headache has already started, a cold compress on the forehead tends to be more helpful.
- Take breaks from your screen and make sure your screen brightness is adjusted to your preferences. Try computer screen filters. Some people who get migraines have extreme light sensitivity.
- Drink water throughout the day.

When to Talk to the Doctor about Headaches. If you must use a pain reliever for headaches more than once a week, on a regular basis, try some of the lifestyle changes I mentioned – such as managing stress, staying hydrated, eating a well-balanced diet, exercising and getting adequate sleep. If your headaches don't improve or get worse, talk to your physician.

Some headaches may be emergencies. Headaches accompanied by vision changes, confusion, dizziness, balance problems, or strength problems are red flags to seek treatment right away. A headache that comes on suddenly and is the worst you have ever experienced is a sign to seek emergency medical care.

A headache with a fever could signal an infection such as a cold, flu, encephalitis, or meningitis. Talk to your doctor about any other symptoms you may be experiencing so you get the treatment you need.

Also, learn how to recognize a stroke. We use the acronym BEFAST to remember the signs, which include loss of balance, eyesight problems such as vision loss, face drooping, arm weakness, and slurred speech.

While tension headaches are frustrating and inconvenient, many people find that they can be prevented. Please reach out to your physician if you need help getting your headaches under control.

Ella Akkerman, MD, is a board-certified neurologist with the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. She sees patients at the Kaiser Permanente Largo Medical Center.



U.S. Post Office to Hike Postal Rates in January

Stock up on 'forever' stamps before the price rises

Source: by John Waggoner, AARP, Updated December 8, 2022

The U.S. Postal Service will raise the price of a first-class “forever” stamp from 60 cents to 63 cents on Jan. 22, a 5 percent increase. A first-class stamp covers the cost to mail a 1-ounce letter. An additional ounce will remain 24 cents. In addition to raising the price of forever stamps, the U.S. Postal Service will implement other postage increases as well, effective Jan. 22.

Metered letters will rise to 60 cents from 57 cents. Domestic postcards will rise to 48 cents from 44 cents. Outbound international letters will rise to \$1.45 from \$1.40. The temporary increase in package delivery rates that started on Oct. 2 will end Jan. 22.

How much do forever stamps cost?

Until Jan. 22, forever stamps cost 60 cents apiece. But the “forever” in their name means that even after the price rise in January, a single forever stamp you paid 60 cents for before Jan. 22 will still send a 1-ounce letter to any U.S. address. You won't have to add additional postage to make up for the price increase. You can still use an original forever stamp purchased 15 years ago for 41 cents to mail a first-class letter today without additional postage.

Forever stamps, introduced in 2007, are always equivalent to the current price of a first-class stamp. Since 2011, virtually all first-class stamps sold are forever stamps.

You can even use forever stamps for outbound international letters. You'll have to add additional stamps to get to the correct amount of postage for international mail, however. For international letters, a forever stamp has the monetary value of the price of a first-class stamp on the day it is used.



BIRTHDAYS

October	
Maria Eric-Williams	1
Pershail Young	2
Peggy Dearing	2
Rev. Evelyn Manson	4
Ellen Watkins	13
Marilyn Davis	17
Ellalene Barnaby	18
Jasmine Barber	18
Earleen Johnson	20
Cylestine A. Laury	22
Boyd Poole	23
Thomas Brown	25
Asha Douglas	28
Helen Jackson	30

November	
Cynthia Clark	3
Charles Blackburn	4
Steven Gbelee	5
Kaleb Gray	6
Ina Fells	8
Anne Peterson	13
Emma Murdock	13
Larry Wilson	13
Tusani Jackson	13
Manson Riley	14
Ebenezer A. Davis	14
Janay McIntosh	22
Joshua Stokes	24
Phil Clark	26
Angelo Brown	30



December	
David King	3
Olive Graves	9
Chinagirl Gbelee	10
Teta Neal	11
Ethel Barnard	13
Andrew Kamara	15
Pearl Stemley	21
Shirley White	21
Barbara Boone	23
Maxine Scott	29
Cleveland Jones	30
Franklin McIntosh	31



ANNIVERSARIES

William & Winnifred
Butler
October 22, 1966
[56 years]

James & Pearl
Stemley
October 26, 1950
[72 years]

Blessings
On Your
Anniversary



Aaron & Terri
Ware
November 2, 1985
[37 years]

Phil & Cynthia
Clark
December 3, 1977
[45 years]

Franklin & Barbara
McIntosh
December 24, 1988
[34 years]

Curtis & Jobie
Bell
December 28, 1955
[67 years]



From the Newsletter Editor

In the midst of our busy lives and the excitement of Christmas, may we pause to thank you, Lord. Your gift of a Saviour to save us from sin and to offer us salvation is greater than any present wrapped and placed under a tree. May we commit to seek you first this day, this season, and throughout our lives.

May your Christmas sparkle with love, laughter, and goodwill, and may the New Year ahead be filled with God's relentless favor, His unending love, and perfect peace.

Sis. Ellulene Barnaby



Ebenezer United Methodist Church
4912 Whitfield Chapel Road
Lanham, MD 20706
Phone: 301-577-0770
Email: church896@verizon.net
www.ebenezerunited.org

The *Beauty of Life* is,
while we cannot undo what
is done, we can see it,
understand it, learn from it
and change. So that
every new moment
is spent not in
regret, guilt, fear
or anger, but in
*wisdom,
understanding
and love*

Be encouraged in the
Lord! He has a plan
for our lives.

Allow His Word to encourage your heart
today so that you can go forward in His
Plan and Purpose for your life.

