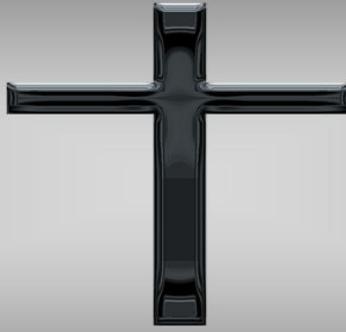


# THE CROSS



"A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL"



November-December 2023 — Volume 27 Issue 6

## 200th Year Church Anniversary Celebration



### Pastor's Prayer

**Rev Robyn M Anderson**

Dear Lord, bless our Pastor as she delivers and preaches Your Holy Word;

Lift her spirit as she embraces Your divine call on her life;

Guide her as she ministers to Your flock and walks in Your wisdom;

Teach her the inner meanings of Holy Scripture through divine revelation;

Reward her works as she daily serves You and fulfills the purpose for which she was created.

Lovingly Presented,  
The Cross Street Church  
Family

### From The Pastor's Desk

2023-2024

**Vision: "Level-Up**

Gather - Connect - Go - Give

Bicentennial Anniversary

Celebrating 200 Years in Ministry

Spiritual Growth in Ministry, Giving and Health and Wellness on Purpose

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV),*

It is truly a great blessing to serve as the new Pastor of the Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

As we journey together in this new season at Cross Street it is imperative that we seek to go to the next level in Christ.

God has truly blessed the Cross Street Church!!! We are celebrating 200 years in Ministry!!!

We truly have "Come this Far by Faith" and "We Are Not Tired Yet!"

We are looking forward to the next level that God will take us individually and collectively as a church!!!!

We thank God for the legacy that Presiding Elder Moses L. Harvill and First Lady Eledia Harvill has blessed us with in the last thirty years.

As we continue to move forward it is going to take Unstoppable Faith and a Godly Mindset with every fiber of our being to be determined that we are going to a next level in Christ!!!

Let's Level-Up!!!! Level Up Spiritually!!! Level-Up as we Grow Numerically and Level-Up as we give Financially!!!

Level-Up in allowing God to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us to do ministry!!!

Cross Street let's go to the next level together! Level-Up!!!

Peace and Blessings!

*Pastor Robyn M. Anderson*



Visit our  
Facebook page

Visit Our Website:  
[WWW.crossstreetamezion.org](http://WWW.crossstreetamezion.org)

# Memo from GOD ....

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

## 1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

## 2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

## 3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster?

For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

## 4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

## 5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

## 6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

## 7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

## 8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

## 9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

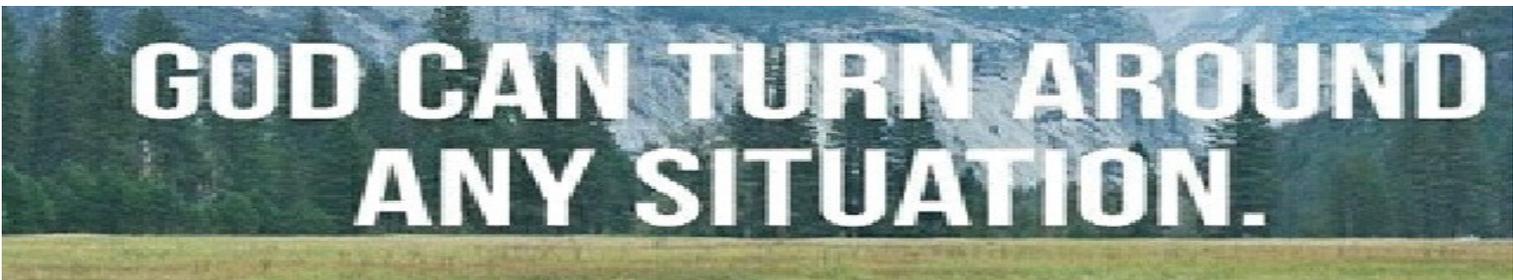
## 10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. Heartache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. See you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that!

Created by **I AM**, a God. It makes My wrong, **You**.

With all My heart I love **YOU** ...

**God**



**GOD CAN TURN AROUND  
ANY SITUATION.**

### What does the Bible say about peace?

Peace is something everyone wants, yet few seem to find. What is peace? It can be defined as "tranquility, harmony, or security." Depending on the situation, it could mean "prosperity" or "well-being." Various forms of the word *peace* are found 429 times in the King James Version of the Bible. There are different types of peace, including false peace, inner peace, peace with God, and peace with man.

In the Old Testament, the primary Hebrew word for "peace" is *shalom*, and it refers to relationships between people (Genesis 34:21), nations (1 Kings 5:12), and God with men (Psalm 85:8). Peace is a desired status in each of these arenas, and *shalom* is often tied to a covenant or a promise kept. A familiar friend (literally, "friend of my peace" in Psalm 41:9) is one with whom you would be at ease, a trusted companion. "Peace" was the standard greeting (1 Samuel 25:6), still used in many cultures today.

Peace is directly related to the actions and attitudes of individuals; but it is ultimately a gift from God (Isaiah 45:7; Leviticus 26:6; John 14:27). The presence of peace indicates God's blessing on man's obedience (Isaiah 32:17; Malachi 2:5) and faith (Isaiah 26:3). There is no peace for the

*(Peace on page 16)*

### What does the Bible say about healing?

Isaiah 53:5, which is then quoted in 1 Peter 2:24, is a key verse on healing, but it is often misunderstood and misapplied. "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." The word translated "healed" can mean either spiritual or physical healing. However, the contexts of Isaiah 53 and 1 Peter 2 make it clear that it is speaking of spiritual healing. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). The verse is talking about sin and righteousness, not sickness and disease. Therefore, being "healed" in both these verses is speaking of being forgiven and saved, not physically healed.

The Bible does not specifically link physical healing with spiritual healing. Sometimes people are physically healed when they place their faith in Christ, but this is not always the case. Sometimes it is God's will to heal, but sometimes it is not. The apostle John gives us the proper perspective: "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). God still performs miracles. God

*(Healing on page 17)*

### What is the definition of grace?

The gospel message is the good news of God's grace, so it is important to know what grace is and to constantly seek to get a better view of what grace does in our lives.

Grace is an essential part of God's character. Grace is closely related to God's benevolence, love, and mercy. Grace can be variously defined as "God's favor toward the unworthy" or "God's benevolence on the undeserving." In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don't deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously.

To fully understand grace, we need to consider who we were without Christ and who we become with Christ. We were born in sin (Psalm 51:5), and we were guilty of breaking God's holy laws (Romans 3:9-20, 23; 1 John 1:8-10). We were enemies of God (Romans 5:6, 10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21), deserving of death (Romans 6:23a). We were unrighteous (Romans 3:10) and without means of justifying ourselves (Romans 3:20). Spiritually, we were destitute, blind, unclean, and dead. Our souls were in peril of everlasting punishment.

But then came grace. God extended His favor to us.

*(Grace on page 12)*

### God's Time Is ALWAYS The Best

This essay is a form of testimony to the glory of God, as well as an affirmation of the adage to wait on the Lord always. It is a personal story that involves completely different and diverse characters who never ever had any relationships with each other, except for the facilitation of God in the entire plot.

Since the story involves medical marvels and miracles, as well as medical personnel and non-medical participants, I need to state upfront that the story itself is for information and inspiration ONLY and not intended to diagnose, prescribe, suggest or in any way to treat any medical condition or indication.

Over the past couple of years, specifically twenty and more years and counting, I had been diagnosed with BPH – benign prostate hyperplasia. No big deal when you think of the alternative. The fact is, the majority of males who live beyond teenage years and head into adulthood are guaranteed to have their prostate increase and grow in size – for reasons not known to medical science, yet. Even though BPH may sound as a better alternative than a full prostatic carcinoma – which is prostate cancer, the burden and symptoms of each situation are nothing to relax about.

*(God's Time on page 18)*

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## PRAYERS



### God's All-Sufficient Grace

**Key Scripture:** *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness'" (2 Corinthians 12:9, NKJV).*

**Key Thought:** God's grace is all-sufficient.

**Prayer:** O Lord, my gracious God, <sup>1</sup> thank you for your grace which is greater than all my sin or sickness. <sup>2</sup> I

rejoice in the marvelous grace you have bestowed upon my life. <sup>3</sup> All of your promises are for me, <sup>4</sup> I truly abound in your grace, <sup>5</sup> O Lord, which is always sufficient for me. <sup>6</sup> Your grace, O Lord, is enough in any situation. When I feel weak, I will be glad and glorify your name, so that the power of Christ, my Savior, will rest upon me. Thank you for your Son, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is gracious like you are, Father. <sup>7</sup>

Thank you for His willingness to impact His grace to me. Even though He was rich, for my sake, He became poor so that, through His poverty, I might be made rich and abundantly supplied. <sup>8</sup> Thank you Father. This is true grace in my life, and I fully and thankfully receive it as a treasure I cannot earn. It is a gift of your great love for me. <sup>9</sup>

Yes, I know your grace is sufficient for me, Father. <sup>10</sup> By your grace, through faith, I was saved. <sup>11</sup> Your unmerited favor (grace) in my life has provided me with the wonderful gift of salvation. <sup>12</sup> Like Noah of old, I have found grace in your sight, Father. <sup>13</sup>

Thank you so much.

My Savior is your Son, Jesus Christ, who is also your incarnate Word, and He is full of grace and truth. <sup>14</sup> Thank you for allowing me to receive of His fullness — grace for grace. <sup>15</sup> How thankful I am, Lord, that I have been justified freely by the grace of Jesus Christ. <sup>16</sup> Because of your loving mercy and grace, Father, my peace is constantly being multiplied. <sup>17</sup> Thank you, God, for the power of your grace which always keeps me. <sup>18</sup>

I rejoice in your grace, Father.

**References:** (1) Exodus 34:6; (2) Ephesians 25; (3) 2 Corinthians 8:1; (4) 2 Corinthians 7:1; (5) 2 Corinthians 8:7; (6) 2 Corinthians 12:9; (7) 2 Thessalonians 3:18; (8) 2 Corinthians 8:9; (9) Romans 6:23; (10) 2 Corinthians 11:2:9; (11) Ephesians 2:8; (12) Ephesians 2:8; (13) Genesis 6:8; (14) John 1:14; (15) Romans 3:24; (16) Romans 5:17; (17) 2 Peter 1:2; (18) 1 Peter 1:5.

Bible Prayers for all your needs  
Victory House Publishers

**OUR SICK AND SHUT-IN NEED YOUR CALLS, YOUR CARDS AND YOUR VISITS...  
BUT ABOVE ALL, THEY NEED ALL OF OUR PRAYERS!**

“  
Loving God, please grant me peace of mind and calm my troubled heart.  
My soul is like a turbulent sea. I can't seem to find my balance so I stumble and worry constantly.  
Give me the strength and clarity of mind to find my purpose and walk the path you've laid out for me.  
I trust your Love God, and know that you will heal this stress. Just as the sun rises each day against the dark of night. Please bring me clarity with the light of God.  
Amen.”  
UNKNOWN  
Woman's Day

**PRAYER FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING**  
Almighty Lord,  
I look up to you for strength and healing  
Shine your face on me and fill me with your life-giving powers. Calm my fears and bring comfort and peace to my body.  
I trust and know that Jesus carried my sickness and my sins on the cross. So by the power of the blood, I decree and declare that any sickness in my body be gone. I rebuke and cast out any diseases and infections in my body. I lose myself from every infirmity and weakened immune system.  
Let your divine healing flow into every cell of my body. Let it flow through my veins and my blood.  
Lord, I believe in your healing power and I believe that by touching the hem of your garment, I've received my healing through the blood of Jesus Christ,  
Amen  
THE GRACEFUL CHAPTER

*Prayer:*  
**WALKING in GOD'S GRACE**  
*Read full Prayer at: christianstt.com*  
*Abba Father, whatever trials and tribulations are placed at my feet, thank You for always being there, to pick me up, turn me around, restore me and make me whole.*  
*I am complete in Your boundless love as I walk in YOUR NEVER-ENDING GRACE.*

**Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. Psalm 99:9**



**The fruit of the Spirit** abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law."** (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (1 John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (1 Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

### THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;  
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;  
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; FAITHFULNESS, *half-heartedness*, **infidelity**;  
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**  
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

**READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR**

**NOVEMBER**

1 Luke 22-24  
 2 John 1-3  
 3 John 4-6  
 4 John 7 10  
 5 John 11-13  
 6 John 14-17  
 7 John 18-21

8 Acts 1-2  
 9 Acts 3-5  
 10 Acts 6-9  
 11 Acts 10-12  
 12 Acts 13-14  
 13 Acts 15-16  
 14 Acts-17-18  
 15 Acts 19-21

16 Acts 22-24  
 17 Acts 25-26  
 18 Acts 27-28  
 19 Romans 1-4  
 20 Romans 5-8  
 21 Romans 9-11  
 22 Romans 12-16  
 23 1 Corinthians 1-4

24 1 Corinthians 5-8  
 25 1 Corinthians 9-12  
 26 1 Corinthians 13-16  
 27 2 Corinthians 1-3  
 28 2 Corinthians 4-6  
 29 2 Corinthians 7-9  
 30 2 Corinthians 10-13

**DECEMBER**

1 Galatians 1-3  
 2 Galatians 4-6  
 3 Ephesians 1-3  
 4 Ephesians 4-6  
 5 Philippians 1-4  
 6 Colossians 1-4  
 7 1 Thessalonians 1-5

8 2 Thessalonians 1-3  
 9 1 Timothy 1-3  
 10 1 Timothy 4-6  
 11 2 Timothy 1-4  
 12 Titus 1-3  
 13 Philemon  
 14 Hebrews 1-4  
 15 Hebrews 5-7

16 Hebrews 8-10  
 17 Hebrews 11-13  
 18 James 1-2  
 19 James 3-5  
 20 1 Peter 1-2  
 21 1 Peter 3-5  
 22 2 Peter 1-3  
 23 1 John 1-2

24 1 John 3-5  
 25 2 John, 3 John, Jude  
 26 Revelation 1-3  
 27 Revelation 4-8  
 28 Revelation 9-12  
 29 Revelation 13-15  
 30 Revelation 16-18  
 31 Revelation 19-22

**JANUARY**

01) Genesis 1-2  
 02) Genesis 3-5  
 03) Genesis 6-9  
 04) Genesis 10-11  
 05) Genesis 12-15  
 06) Genesis 16-19  
 07) Genesis 20-22

08) Genesis 23-26  
 09) Genesis 27-29  
 10) Genesis 30-32  
 11) Genesis 33-36  
 12) Genesis 37-39  
 13) Genesis 40-42  
 14) Genesis 43-46  
 15) Genesis 47-50

16) Exodus 1-4  
 17) Exodus 5-7  
 18) Exodus 8-10  
 19) Exodus 11-13  
 20) Exodus 14-17  
 21) Exodus 18-20  
 22) Exodus 21-24  
 23) Exodus 25-27

24) Exodus 28-31  
 25) Exodus 32-34  
 26) Exodus 35-37  
 27) Exodus 38-40  
 28) Leviticus 1-4  
 29) Leviticus 5-7  
 30) Leviticus 8-10  
 31) Leviticus 11-13

Name of God	Meaning	Application
<b>JEHOVAH –SHALOM</b>	The Lord is Peace	God defeats our enemies to bring us peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace. God brings inner peace and harmony.
<b>JEHOVAH – SHAMMAH</b>	The Lord is There The Lord My Companion	God's presence is not limited or contained in the Tabernacle or Temple, but is accessible to all who love and obey Him.
<b>JEHOVAH – TSIDKENU</b>	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jesus is the King who would come from David's line, and is the one who imparts His righteousness to us.
<b>YAH, ORJAH</b>	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. God promises His continuing presence.
<b>YHWH</b>	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful.
<b>ADONAI</b>	The Lord My Great Lord	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total authority.
<b>EL</b>	The Strong One	He is more powerful than any false god. God will overcome all obstacles. We can depend on God.

There are various names of God, many of which enumerate the various qualities of a Supreme Being. The English word "god" (and its equivalent in other languages) is used by multiple religions as a noun or name to refer to different deities, or specifically to the Supreme Being, as denoted in English by the capitalized and uncapitalized terms "God" and "god". Ancient cognate equivalents for the biblical Hebrew Elohim, one of the most common names of God in the Bible, include proto-Semitic El, biblical Aramaic Elah, and Arabic 'ilah. The personal or proper name for God in many of these languages may either be distinguished from such attributes, or homonymic. For example, in Judaism the tetragrammaton is sometimes related to the ancient Hebrew ehieh ("I will be"). In the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 3:14), Yahweh, the personal name of God, is revealed directly to Moses. Correlation between various theories and interpretation of the name of "the one God", used to signify a monotheistic or ultimate Supreme Being from which all other divine attributes derive, has been a subject of ecumenical discourse between Eastern and Western scholars for over two centuries. In Christian theology the word is considered a personal and a proper name of God. On the other hand, the names of God in a different tradition are sometimes referred to by symbols. The question whether divine names used by different religions are equivalent has been raised and analyzed.

### KINGDOMTIDE

**Kingdomtide** was initiated in 1937 by the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches). The emphasis includes evangelism, world missions, and the work for peace and justice in all relationships. Kingdomtide Begins on the last Sunday in August and continues until the beginning of Advent.

**Color:** Green is the liturgical color for Kingdomtide. Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and Kingdomtide.

### ADVENT

**Advent** is the season of expectation, hope and celebration of the past, present, and future comings of Jesus Christ to the world. Much of the focus is on the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah to Israel and the expectancy of that fulfillment. The Advent cry is "Come," even though Emmanuel has come. Jesus has come, presently comes into the hearts of believers through grace, and is yet to return. This season is a time of anticipation as the Church makes ready for the coming of the Lord and the celebration of Jesus coming as a babe in Bethlehem. Therefore, Advent embodies a vital element of the Christian faith. The Advent season has marked the beginning of the Christian Year since the eight-century and consists of the four weeks before Christmas.

**Color:** Purple (violet or Lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting.

### LITURGICAL COLORS

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word "leitourgia" that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

**Purple** (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

**Green** is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and Kingdomtide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

**White** is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

**Red** is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

**Black** represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

**Gold** is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

### Other Colors

**Blue** is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

**Kente Cloth** is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word "kenten" referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one's heritage.

### Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart for God's Vision for the Church

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)

2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast. "Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" ( Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)

3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant. Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)

4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)

5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

### Guidelines for Daniel Fast

#### Foods We May Eat

After answering hundreds of questions about the Daniel Fast on the blog, I developed these food guidelines. My hope is that it will serve as a more complete list. The original list used by many people was issued in a book about fasting. I know the author tried to do the best he could, but that isn't the same as getting hundreds of questions seeking clarification.

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods. Look for the list of ingredients on the label (not the nutritional value) to make sure all the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

Foods to include in your eating plan during the Daniel Fast

**All fruits.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

**All vegetables.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are artichokes,

asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

**All whole grains,** including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

**All nuts and seeds,** including sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

**All legumes.** These can be canned or dried. Legumes include dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

**All quality oils** including olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

**Beverages:** spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

**Other:** tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

**Note: Unsweetened plant-based milks and juices can be used in recipes or on cereal, but the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water.**

#### Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

**All meat,** animal, fish and seafood products including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and shellfish.

**All dairy products** including milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

**All sweeteners** including sugar, raw sugar, date sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, cane juice, date honey, and stevia.

**All leavened bread** including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

**All leavening agents** including yeast, baking soda and baking powder.

**All refined and processed foods products** including artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

**All deep-fried foods** including potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

**All solid fats** including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

**Beverages** including coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, **READ THE LABELS** so you are aware of the ingredients in the package.!

#### Be blessed on your fast

Learn more about the Daniel Fast at <http://Daniel-Fast.com>

**"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)**

## 10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: “your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God’s Kingdom is from “strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7), “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17), and from “glory to glory” (2Cor. 3:18).

3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.

4. During your period of fasting, feed on God’s Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.

5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.

6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.

8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.

9. Remember that hunger is purely a

matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.

10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

**Total Fast:** Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

**Partial fast:** Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

**1 Meal Fast:** Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

**Daniel Fast:** Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

# + PRAY

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

► **PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE:** Ask God to protect those most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

► **PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS:** Ask God to give our local, state, and national leaders wisdom in how to deal with the virus.

► **PRAY FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:** Ask that God would guide and protect them as they care for the sick.

► **PRAY FOR FAMILIES:** Ask God to comfort and provide for those whose businesses, job stability, and schooling have been affected.

► **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH:** Ask God to help His people have courage, find ways to serve those in need, and continue proclaiming the Gospel.



## A Poem of Praise

Father God, I love You so;  
You care for me even when I don't know.  
I often question Your intent,  
Despite those promises You've already kept.  
I try to make sense of all around,  
yet my eyes focus narrowly on my own.  
You forgive my impatience,  
and my self-righteous thoughts;  
And secured my salvation through Your Son's  
death on the cross.  
He redeemed all my sins and gave me new life;  
an act that cost a most precious price.  
With Your help, dear Lord,  
I will trust in the perfect plan  
that is a gift from Your great hand.  
Thank You for each day's new mercies,  
and the grace that wipes away all my inequities.  
To You, Adonai, is my praise for always;  
may my last breath be a whisper  
giving You all the glory.

*juliesanne.com*



## Sunday School is a Family Affair

We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103  
Virtual Classes (See page 29 for Details)  
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

**Come Grow with US!**

**Life in Christ Brings Freedom/Live as You Were Taught**

**Background Scripture:** Colossians 2:6-23

### EXALT!

**Declaration:** Colossians 2: 16-23

**<sup>16</sup> Therefore, do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food or drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or of observing festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths. <sup>17</sup> These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the body belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, initiatory visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, <sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, grows with a growth that is from God.**

**Affirmation:** Christianity is God reaching down to man in love through Christ..

### ENGAGE

Paul warns his readers against adopting Jewish practices of observing festivals and Sabbaths and not eating certain foods for ritual purposes. In ritual purposes. In comparing the ritual practices with a “shadow of what is to come” and the “substance [that] belongs to Christ,” Paul is appealing to Platonic philosophy, according to which our perceived reality consists of “shadows” of the real “substance.” See also Hebrews 10<sup>1</sup>: “The law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities.”

The line about “self-abasement” in verse 18 and the regulations saying, “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” in verse 21 appear to refer to ascetic practices, including intensive fasting. (Ascetic practices are practices that involve severe self-discipline typically for religious reasons.) It is possible that some were fasting in such a manner in order to induce the visions mentioned later in verse 18. One reason Paul discourages such practices is that they may “puff up” (v. 18; compare 1 Corinthians 8:1), that is; they make one prideful or boastful about one’s own accomplishments without contributing to the good of one’s neighbor.

Verse 19, with its reference to “the head, from whom the whole body [is] nourished” refers back to Colossians 1:18, where Christ is identified as the head and the church as the body. Here the implication is that if one adopts “a human way of thinking” (v. 18) he or she will be cut off from the head.

This reference to a “human way of thinking” and the “human commands and teachings” (v. 22) recall Jesus’ teaching in Mark 7:7 and Matthew 15:9, where Jesus condemns the traditions of the elders and those who “abandon the commandment of God and hold the human tradition” (Mark 7:8).

Break into small groups and discuss the following: 1. Truth be told, some adults feel deprived if they do not get everything they think they “deserve.” Can you think of anyone in your personal life who may feel they are de deprived of what they feel they “deserve?” 2. Adults confuse what is required by law with what is tradition. Read Mark 7:7 and Matthew 15:8-9. What do these two passages mean? What do they say about tradition? 3. Adults do not want to miss out on any of the “good” things of human life. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Break into small groups. Think about and discuss the following questions:

1. Adults grow toward greater freedom in Christ as they study Paul’s teachings. Read 1 Timothy 4:3-5. What does this passage say about food and other “good” things?
2. Adults increase in faith as they exercise newfound Christian freedom in daily life. What are some of your daily Christian practices? How have they impacted your life? Share with the group.
3. Adults learn to avoid worldly teachings that deny their Christian commitment. Have you ever had a worldly experience that has challenged your commitment to Christ? Share what happen.

*(Freedom on page 11)*

**Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God’s hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God’s children.**

## EDUCATE

**Truth in the Light of Heresy (Colossians 1:16-17):** The opening “therefore” is important. It connects this thought with the previous thought. Because Jesus won such a glorious victory on the cross, we are to let no one judge us in food or in drink or in other matters related to legalism. A life that is centered on Jesus and what He did on the cross has no place for legalism. The Old Testament Law had certain provisions that are done away with in Jesus, regarding such things as food and sabbaths. It isn't that those laws were bad, simply that they were a shadow of what is to come. Once the substance-Jesus Christ-has come, we don't need to shadow any more. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/colossians-1/>. Cited April 15, 2023).

**Paul Rebukes the Strange (Colossians 1:18-19):** These aspects of false humility and the worship of angels were parts of the false teaching troubling the Colossian Christians. That is why Paul touches back on these themes throughout the letter of Colossians. The antidote for both of these false teachings is simply more of Jesus, exalting Him above angels, and realizing that because of His finished work there is nothing to take pride in. False humility and the worship of angels do not make anyone more spiritual. Instead, holding fast to the head (Jesus) makes us truly spiritual. This describes the spiritual arrogance of these false teachers and those who believed what they taught. There are few things more dangerous among Christians than spiritual pride and arrogance. When these strange, mystical movements arise in the church, they don't appeal to the whole body, but only to a few “elite” Christians. This is not the cause under the Head, Jesus, because He wants all body to grow together. This God's plan for church growth. As we remain faithful and connected to Jesus (our Head), and God gives the increase. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/colossians-1/>. Cited April 15, 2023).

**Paul Rebukes the Essence of Legalism (Colossians 1:20-23):** This is a perfect description of legalistic religion, defined more by what we don't do than by what we do. Christianity is a moral religion and has clear moral boundaries. But at its foundation, Christianity is a religion of positive action; and remembering this is the key to living above legalism. Our identification with Jesus in both His death and resurrection (see Colossians 2:12) becomes the foundation for our Christian life, instead of our law-keeping. One aspect of legalism is that the doctrines of men are promoted as the laws of God. We might regard this as the greatest indictment against legalism in the Bible. The bottom line: legalism's rules have no value in restraining the indulgence of the flesh; in fact, legalism feeds the flesh in a subtle, powerful way; a concept which Paul rebukes. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/colossians-1/>. Cited April 15, 2023).

## ELEVATE:

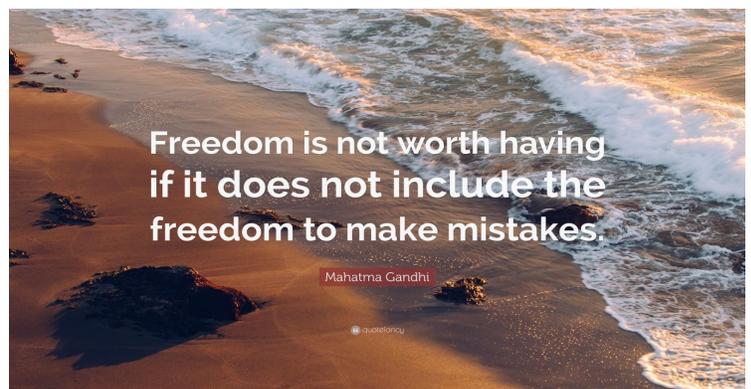
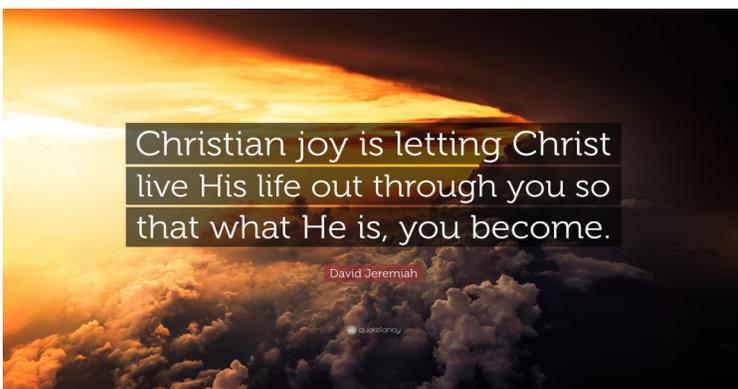
Discuss the following questions as an entire group:

1. Name worldly norms, teachings, or practices that challenge faithfulness to Christ. What draws people to these norms and practices?
2. Invite participants to reflect silently on the meaning of the freedom Christians enjoy in Christ. Ask them to identify ways in which fullness in the life of Christ leads to true freedom.
3. Encourage listening to recorded music that participants find helpful in increasing their commitment to Christian living.

## iThink:

1. Research the Greek philosophical concepts that Paul found in conflict with the Colossians' commitment to following Christ.
2. Discuss the superiority of “spiritual circumcision” in Christ to the Jewish practice of physical circumcision as a sign of membership in the faith community. How does being made new in Christ fulfill the ancient promises made to Abraham and are only partly revealed through the Mosaic law?
3. Name some false teachers in the world today, and tell how they attempt to turn believers away from Christ.

**KEY VERSE: As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue in the faith. Colossians 2:6-7a**



(Grace from page 3)

Grace is what saves us (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is the essence of the gospel (Acts 20:24). Grace gives us victory over sin (James 4:6). Grace gives us “eternal encouragement and good hope” (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Paul repeatedly identified grace as the basis of his calling as an apostle (Romans 15:15; 1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 3:2, 7). Jesus Christ is the embodiment of grace, coupled with truth (John 1:14).

The Bible repeatedly calls grace a “gift” (e.g., Ephesians 4:7). This is an important analogy because it teaches us some key things about grace:

First, anyone who has ever received a gift understands that a gift is much different from a loan, which requires repayment or return by the recipient. The fact that grace is a gift means that *nothing is owed in return*.

Second, there is no cost to the person who receives a gift. A gift is *free to the recipient*, although it is not free to the giver, who bears the expense. The gift of salvation costs us sinners nothing. But the price of such an extravagant gift came at a great cost for our Lord Jesus, who died in our place.

Third, once a gift has been given, ownership of the gift has transferred and it is now *ours to keep*. There is a permanence in a gift that does not exist with loans or advances. When a gift changes hands, the giver permanently relinquishes all rights to renege or take back the gift in the future. God’s grace is ours forever.

Fourth, in the giving of a gift, the giver voluntarily forfeits something he owns, willingly losing what belongs to him so that the recipient will profit from it. The giver becomes poorer so the recipient can become richer. This *generous and voluntary exchange* from the giver to the recipient is visible in 2 Corinthians 8:9: “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

Finally, the Bible teaches that grace is completely *unmerited*. The gift and the act of giving have nothing at all to do with our merit or innate quality (Romans 4:4; 11:5–6; 2 Timothy 1:9–10). In fact, the Bible says quite clearly that we don’t deserve God’s salvation. Romans 5:8–10 says, “God

demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . . While we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son.”

Grace does not stop once we are saved; God is gracious to us for the rest of our lives, working within and upon us. The Bible encourages us with many additional benefits that grace secures for every believer

Grace justifies us before a holy God (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:6; Titus 3:7).

- Grace provides us access to God to communicate and fellowship with Him (Ephesians 1:6; Hebrews 4:16).

Grace wins for us a new relationship of intimacy with God (Exodus 33:17).

- Grace disciplines and trains us to live in a way that honors God (Titus 2:11–14; 2 Corinthians 8:7).

- Grace grants us immeasurable spiritual riches (Proverbs 10:22; Ephesians 2:7).

- Grace helps us in our every need (Hebrews 4:16).

- Grace is the reason behind our every deliverance (Psalm 44:3–8; Hebrews 4:16).

- Grace preserves us and comforts, encourages, and strengthens us (2 Corinthians 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17; 2 Timothy 2:1).

Grace is actively and continually working in the lives of God’s people. Paul credited the success of his ministry not to his own substantial labors but to “the grace of God that was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10). Grace is the ongoing, benevolent act of God working in us, without which we can do nothing (John 15:5). Grace is greater than our sin (Romans 5:20), more abundant than we expect (1 Timothy 1:14), and too wonderful for words (2 Corinthians 9:15).

As the recipients of God’s grace, Christians are to be gracious to others. Grace is given to us to serve others and to exercise our spiritual gifts for the building up of the church (Romans 12:6; Ephesians 3:2, 7; 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10).

## What does it mean to be saved by grace?

**Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—**

**That saved a wretch like me!**

**I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.**

The words of this famous hymn by John Newton seem to resonate with people of all theological persuasions: it is performed in churches of all kinds, from evangelical Christian, to Roman Catholic, to mainline liberal, to Mormon. It has been recorded by countless artists from Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley, to the Three Tenors, to Rascal Flatts and Alan Jackson. The concept of (or at least the word) grace is firmly planted in our culture.

The concept of grace as found in the Bible is multifaceted, but it can be summed up in the definition “undeserved favor.” The Bible says that we are saved by grace. The grace of God is expressed by God’s forgiveness of our sins, and His blessings to us include peace and fulfillment in this life and, in the life to come, unencumbered fellowship with Him for all eternity. Just as the song “Amazing Grace” has gained almost universal acceptance, it is difficult to find any religious expression with roots in Christianity that does not extoll the virtues of grace. No one with even minimal exposure to Christianity would be so crass as to claim that he has lived a life of such sterling character that God owes him eternal life. The vast majority will admit that they have shortcomings and are in need of God’s grace in some form.

However, there is much misunderstanding about being saved by grace. A great many who call themselves Christians assume that the grace of God has established a system whereby the sinner can mitigate his deserved punishment by his own efforts. For some this may be a formal system of sacraments that infuse the soul with the grace of God. For others the system is less formal but still includes various religious activities, such as church attendance, baptism, contributing to the offering, and doing good deeds. While most agree that “nobody’s perfect,” many say that God in His “grace” will overlook our sins *if* He sees that we have made a genuine effort to do the right thing, mend our ways, and avail ourselves of the help He offers through the

(Grace on page 13)

(Grace from page 12)

church—if He sees that the trajectory of our lives is headed in the right direction, then in His “grace” He will forgive our sins and grant us eternal life. In this view of “grace,” the sinner does not earn eternal life in an absolute sense, but his penitent response and genuine effort does trigger a gracious response from the Father. This belief, although widespread, contradicts the true meaning of grace (“unmerited favor”).

This example may help illustrate the above view of grace: a teenager works hard all summer to save money to buy a car. He works a regular job and does yard work and odd jobs on the side. He saves his money and does not spend it frivolously. Nevertheless, at the end of the summer, he simply does not have enough money to buy a car that will meet his needs. His father, seeing his diligence and frugality, graciously steps in and not only makes up the difference but also adds more money to the car fund so that his son can buy a car that is better than he thought he could ever afford. The son’s best effort was not good enough, but the father’s grace makes up the difference. No one would claim that the father was obligated to make up the difference, so, when he does, it is an act of grace. If the son had been fired from his job for showing up late, had lazed around at the pool every day instead of working, or had spent what money he had on fast food and video games, then the father would not have stepped in to make up the difference. It would be incorrect to say that the son “earned” the car, for he did not, but his effort did trigger a gracious response from his father.

According to the Bible, is this really grace? The answer is NO! Grace is *undeserved* favor; it is God’s blessing on the *unworthy*. In the example above, the father bestowed his favor because he felt his son’s efforts should be rewarded—the father’s gift was based on a genuine effort by the son and was therefore not true grace. Jesus illustrated true grace with the story of

a father who received his runaway son with celebratory joy—a totally unworthy individual who brought nothing to his father except dishonor and shame was lavished with undeserved blessings (Luke 15:11–24).

We are saved by grace, not by a mixture of God’s grace and our meritorious works. According to Scripture, we can do nothing to earn salvation, nor are our best efforts good enough to elicit a gracious response from God so that He will make up the difference. All of our righteous deeds are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Even considering our best efforts, we have fallen short of God’s standard of righteousness (Romans 3:23), and we deserve death (Romans 6:23). We are not commanded to “do our best” for God but to love Him perfectly and completely (Matthew 22:37). We fail in that. The command is not to “try” to love our neighbors but to actually succeed in loving our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). In spite of our “best efforts,” we fail—and who can honestly claim they gave it their “best effort” anyway?

People will often try to comfort those who realize their shortcomings by saying something like, “Don’t be afraid—God knows your heart,” as if that should be a comfort. If God knows our hearts, we are doomed indeed—there is no place left to hide! Our only hope is to place our faith in Jesus Christ who lived a perfect life, died on the cross to pay for our sins, and rose again. Our sin is imputed to Him, and His righteousness is imputed to us when we trust Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). We are justified not by our works (Romans 3:20) but by Jesus’ resurrection (Romans 4:25). Faith itself is not a “good work” that causes God to take notice of us. Faith is repenting of our sin, admitting that we are hopelessly and helplessly lost and unable to do anything to gain God’s favor, then simply accepting the salvation that He offers freely.

We are saved by grace; the work is God’s, not ours. “Now to the one who

works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness” (Romans 4:4–5). Here we see two great truths. First, God justifies the ungodly—not people who have done their best and somehow elicited a gracious response from God. God justifies those who do *not* deserve it. Second, God justifies people who receive salvation by faith—not people who give it their best effort. If they are justified in any part based on what they do, they are receiving wages, not a gift. If grace is based on works to any degree, then it is not grace (Romans 11:6).

We are saved by grace from beginning to end. Once a person has come to faith in Christ, he will undoubtedly realize that the only reason he was able to have faith is that God was drawing him even before he knew it (see John 6:44). Left to himself, the sinner would have continued to rebel and flee from God. Even before we believe, the very desire to come to God is God’s grace at work to save us. “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (Psalm 3:8, ESV; cf. Revelation 7:10).

Salvation by grace means that, from first to last, it is undeserved. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Grace is not God doing 95 or even 99.9 percent, with us making up the difference. Grace is God doing 100 percent and our humble acceptance of it, recognizing that we are unworthy and have nothing to contribute.

***Could my tears forever flow,  
Could my zeal no languor know,  
These for sin could not atone—  
Thou must save, and Thou alone:  
In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.***  
(Augustus Toplady)

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**GOD'S AMAZING GRACE**  
will lead you to a peaceful, joy-filled life.

**CORNERED**

**Read: Luke 6:27-36**

***Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:28***

One Sunday morning, D. L. Moody entered a house in Chicago to escort some children to Sunday school. During his visit, three men backed him into a corner and threatened him. "Look here," Moody said. "Give a fellow a chance to say his prayers, won't you?" The men actually allowed him to call out to God, and Moody prayed for them so earnestly

that they left the room.

Had I been in Moody's situation, I might have called for help or looked for the back door. I'm not sure I would have acted on Jesus's command to His followers: "Pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:28).

Praying for the people who treat us with contempt is one way to "do good to those who hate [us]" (v. 27). Jesus explained that Christians get no credit for swapping acts of kindness with other "nice" people. He said, "Even sinners do that" (v. 33).

However, blessing our persecutors (Romans 12:14) sets us apart from and

aligns us with the most High, because God is kind even to wicked people (Luke 6:35).

Today, if you feel "cornered" by someone, seek safety if the situation calls for it, and follow Jesus's teaching: Pray for that person (Luke 23:34). Prayer is your best defense.

Jennifer Benson Schuldt

**Prayer Tips: Get a book of collected prayers, and see if you can use that to enhance your prayer life.**

**UNANSWERED**

**Read: Luke 18:1-8**

***Summon your power, God; show us your strength, our God, as you have done before. Psalm 68:28***

One of my biggest struggles is unanswered prayer. Maybe you can relate. You ask God to rescue a friend from addiction, to grant salvation to a loved one, to heal a sick child, to mend a relationship. All these things you think must be God's will. For years you pray. But you hear nothing back from Him and

you see no results.

You remind the Lord that He's powerful. That your request is a good thing. You plead. You wait. You doubt—maybe He doesn't hear you, or maybe He isn't so powerful after all. You quit asking—for days or months. You feel guilty about doubting. You remember that God wants you to take your needs to Him, and you tell Him your request again.

We may sometimes feel we're like the persistent widow in Jesus's parable recorded in Luke 18. She keeps coming to the judge, badgering him and trying to wear him down so he'll give in. But we

know that God is Kind and more powerful than the judge in the parable. We trust Him, for He is good and wise and sovereign. We remember that Jesus said we "should always pray and not give up" (v. 1).

So we ask, "Summon your power, God; show us your strength, our God, as you have done before" (Psalm 68:28). And then we trust Him. . . And wait. Anne Cetas

**Prayer Tip: Check out this book of collected prayers: Classic Christian Prayers by Owen Collins.**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD**

**Read: Matthew 6:5-15**

***Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Matthew 6:8***

A man had transformed an overgrown plot of ground into a beautiful garden and was showing a friend what he had accomplished. Pointing to a bed of flowers, he said, "Look at what I did here." His companion corrected him, "You mean, 'Look at what God and I did

here.' " The gardener replied, "I guess you're right. But you should have seen the shape this plot was in when He was taking care of it by himself."

We chuckle at the man's reply, but it expresses a wonderful spiritual truth—we are co-workers with God. This applies to every area of life, including prayer. It answers a question that naturally comes to mind when we reflect on Jesus's statements in Matthew 6. He said we don't need to pray on and on with vain repetitions like the pagans, because our Father knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:7-8).

The question is, then, why pray? The answer is simple and comforting. God has graciously chosen to give us the privilege of being His partners in both the physical and spiritual areas of life. Through prayer we work with Him in defeating the powers of evil and in bringing about the fulfillment of His loving purposes in the world. Partners with God—what a privilege! What an incentive to pray! Herb Vander Lugt

**Prayer Tip: Remember PUSH: Pray Until Something Happens.**

**YOU CAN ALWAYS PRAY**

**Read: Acts 12:1-16**

***When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. Psalm 118:5***

The young mother called out to the missionary, "Come quick! My baby is going to die." Gale Fields was in Papua (a province in Indonesia) helping her husband, Phil, translate the Bible into Orya, a tribal language. But they also provided medical help whenever possible. Gale looked at the malaria-stricken child and realized she didn't

have the right medicine to help the infant.

"I'm sorry," she told the mother, "I don't have any medicine for babies this small." Gale paused, then said, "I could pray for her though."

"Yes, anything to help my baby," answered the mother. Gale prayed for the baby and then went home feeling helpless. After a little while, she again heard the mother cry out, "Gale, come quick and see my baby!"

Expecting the worst, Gale went to the baby's side. This time, though, she noticed improvement. The dangerous fever was gone. Later, Gale would say,

"No wonder the Orya Christians learned to pray. They know God answers."

The early Christians prayed for Peter to be released from prison and then were "astonished" when God answered them (Acts 12:16). We respond that way too, but we shouldn't be surprised when God answers our prayers. Remember, His power is great and His resources are endless. Dave Branon

**Prayer Tips: If you have family members who have strayed from the faith, get James Bank's book Prayers for Prodigals.**

# THE ARMOR OF GOD

## EPHESIANS 6:10-18

"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11

### The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.



### Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed. →

### The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

### The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

### The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)

Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

### The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)

which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

## Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, <sup>13</sup> against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— <sup>19</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

(Peace from page 3)  
wicked (Isaiah 48:22).

As valuable as peace is, it is not surprising to find that it is sometimes counterfeited. Empty promises of peace can be used to manipulate others. Deceitful men speak words of peace while secretly planning evil (Obadiah 1:7). The Antichrist will confirm a treaty, producing a temporary peace which he will then abruptly shatter as he reveals his true colors (Daniel 9:27). False teachers proclaim peace when God is actually proclaiming judgment (Ezekiel 13:10-16). In Jeremiah's day, the religious leaders dealt only with the symptoms of the national problems, without addressing the sinful root of the crisis. These false prophets declared everything was well between God and Israel: "Peace, peace," they said, when there was no real peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

In the New Testament, the primary Greek word for "peace" is *eirene*, and it refers to rest and tranquility. A key focus of peace in the New Testament is the advent of Jesus Christ, as announced by the angels in Luke 2:14 ("Peace on earth . . ."). Isaiah had predicted the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and He is called the Lord of peace in 2 Thessalonians 3:16. It is through Christ's work of justification that we can have peace with God (Romans 5:1), and that peace will keep our hearts and minds secure (Philippians 4:7).

God commands us to seek peace (Psalm 34:14; Matthew 5:9). We should "make every effort to do what leads to peace" (Romans 14:19). Of course, there will be some people who do not desire peace, but we are still to do our utmost to be at peace with them (Romans 12:18).

Believers have an obligation to "let the peace of God rule" in their hearts (Colossians 3:15). This means we have the choice either to trust God's promises (letting His peace rule) or to rely on ourselves and reject the peace He offers. Jesus gave His disciples peace based on the truth that He has

overcome the world (John 14:27; 16:33). Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, so, if we are allowing the Spirit of God to rule in our lives, we will experience His peace (Galatians 5:22-23). To be spiritually minded brings life and peace, according to Romans 8:6.

The world will continue to have wars and interpersonal conflicts until Jesus comes to establish true, lasting peace (see Isaiah 11:1-10), but God will give His peace to those who trust Him. Jesus took the chastisement of our peace (Isaiah 53:5) and has made it possible for us to have peace with God. Once His peace rules in our hearts, we are able to share that peace with others; we become publishers of peace (Isaiah 52:7) and ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

### What does the Bible say about inner peace?"

The world places a priority on inner peace, and it offers thousands of suggestions to those who seek "peace of mind and soul." Usually, the gurus of inner peace point to oneself as the source of peace. There is much talk of meditation, finding an "inner light," and chakras. If we need any help from outside of ourselves, worldly wisdom says, it will come in the form of a "spirit guide" or perhaps some crystals or herbs. The problem with such advice, besides the obvious endorsement of witchcraft, is that it completely ignores the source of true peace—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible has a lot to say about peace. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Paul refers to "the God of all peace" (Romans 15:13, 33; Galatians 6:16). The term *peace* is often used as a greeting and a benediction (see Luke 24:36). So what exactly is peace, and how can we have "inner peace"?

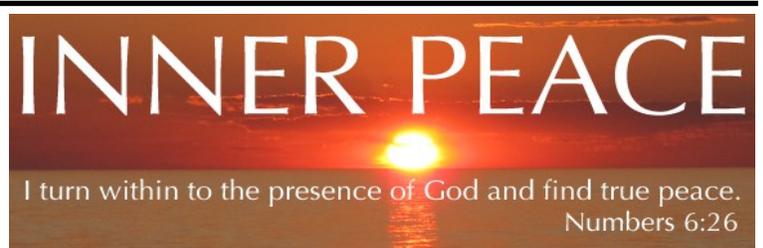
A word often translated "peace" in the Bible actually means "to tie together as a whole, when all essential parts are joined together." Inner peace, then, is a wholeness of mind and spirit, a whole heart at rest. Inner peace has

little to do with external surroundings. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." He had also told His followers that "in this world you will have many troubles. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). So peace is not the absence of trouble; it is the presence of God.

Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). When the "God of all peace" comes to live inside a believing heart (1 Corinthians 6:19), He begins to produce His own characteristics in that life. Inner peace comes from knowing that circumstances are temporary and that God is sovereign over all (Isaiah 46:9-11). Peace comes from exercising faith in the character of God and His Word. We can have peace in the midst of challenges when we remember that "all things work together for the good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). We can choose peace rather than give way to fear and worry. Inner peace resulting from a relationship with God allows us to keep things in proper perspective. We can accept difficult situations on earth by remembering that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

We are commanded to "live in peace" with others, as far as it is up to us (Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 12:14). To live at peace means we interact with those around us in accordance with our own wholeness of mind. Our reactions to circumstances can bring peace to an otherwise chaotic situation. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). And James 3:18 says, "Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness." God's desire is that we who know Him learn to live in peace within ourselves first. Then we can radiate that peace to others, bringing calmness and wisdom to tense situations, and in so doing be lights in the world (Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:14-15).

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(Healing from page 3)

still heals people. Sickness, disease, pain, and death are still realities in this world. Unless the Lord returns, everyone who is alive today will die, and the vast majority of them (Christians included) will die as the result of a physical problem (disease, sickness, injury). It is not always God's will to heal us physically.

Ultimately, our full physical healing awaits us in heaven. In heaven, there will be no more pain, sickness, disease, suffering, or death (Revelation 21). We all need to be less preoccupied with our physical condition in this world and a lot more concerned with our spiritual condition (Romans 12:1-2). Then we can focus our hearts on heaven where we will no longer have to deal with physical problems. Revelation 21:4 describes the true healing we should all be longing for: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

### What is divine healing?

Divine healing involves a supernatural act which resolves a physical, emotional or spiritual problem. In a Christian context, the supernatural element is God, many times through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

### Non-Christian Views on Divine Healing

Most of the major world religions believe in some sort of supernatural healing. Islam uses *Ruqya* (incantations) to cure disease by countering black magic and casting out Jinn. Tibetan Buddhists employ *Gso-wa Rig-pa*, which includes elements of medicine, mantra and meditation. Those who hold to modern pantheism, such as New Age philosophy or cosmic humanism, use a wide variety of techniques from ancient religions and the occult.

The constant among all of these views of divine healing is the necessity of ritual. Healing, in the non-Christian religion's view, requires a physical ritual to coerce a deity into action or to manipulate an impersonal healing

force.

### New Testament Divine Healing

Approximately one fifth of the Gospel narrative is devoted to Jesus' healing ministry. At the start of His ministry, Jesus "went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Matthew 4:23).

Later, when Jesus sent His twelve disciples out to preach the gospel, He gave them authority to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2). After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the apostles continued healing many (Acts 5:12-16). Acts records a number of healings by Peter, John, and Paul (19:12; 28:8-9).

### Christian Divine Healing Today

Concerning divine healing today, there are a couple different schools of thought. Some Christians believe the gift of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9) ceased along with the sign gift of tongues. This position is called cessationism. Other Christians believe all of the sign gifts are still in use today.

While we take the cessationist view, we do believe that God is still "the LORD who heals" (Exodus 15:26). He has not lost His ability to heal, and His love for His people has not diminished. Divine healing may come through traditional medicine or through direct intervention by God in response to prayer. Or, if God wills, wholeness may not come until the ultimate healing in heaven. God is the Great Physician, and all healing, physical, emotional, and spiritual, belongs to Him.

### What is the spiritual gift of healing?

The spiritual gift of healing is the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit of God that miraculously brings healing and deliverance from disease and/or infirmity. It is the power of God that destroys the work of sin and/or the devil in the human body, such as the healings that Jesus and the disciples performed (Matthew 4:24; 15:30; Acts 5:15-16; 28:8-9). The gift of healing given to the church is primarily noted in 1 Corinthians 12, where the

spiritual gifts are listed.

Spiritual gifts are powers, skills, abilities, or knowledge given by God through the Holy Spirit to Christians. Paul tells the church that the purpose of the spiritual gifts is to edify other believers and, ultimately, to glorify God. God gives these gifts for His use, but in the Corinthian church, they were apparently a type of status symbol or being used to indicate superiority. Interestingly, 1 Corinthians 12:9 refers to "gifts" of healing in the plural, which may indicate that there are different gifts of healing. The gifts of healing could mean a very wide range of skills or abilities. This could be from the power to do miraculous or dramatic healing, like making the lame walk, or the use or understanding of medicine. It could even be the ability to empathize and show love to others to the point of healing an emotional wound.

There has been much debate about the usage of the spiritual gift of healing among Christians. Some believe the gift of healing and some other sign gifts are no longer operative today, while others believe the miraculous gifts are still in use today. Of course, the power to heal was never in the gifted person himself/herself. The power to heal is from God and God alone. Although God does still heal today, we believe His healing through the gift of healing belonged primarily to the apostles of the first-century church to affirm that their message was from God (Acts 2:22; 14:3).

God still performs miracles. God still heals people. There is nothing preventing God from healing one person through the ministry of another person. However, the miraculous gift of healing, as a spiritual gift, does not seem to be functioning today. God can certainly intervene in whatever manner He sees fit, whether in "normal" fashion or through a miracle. Our salvation itself is miracle. We were dead in sin, but God entered our lives and made us new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). That is the greatest healing of all.

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*(God's Time from page 3)*

Due to the size and extent of my situation, various Urologists, had suggested numerous approaches, none of which gave me any lasting level of healing or comfort. To think that none of the many, many approaches to treatment and therapy worked for me, was mind bending. Watchful waiting to see what would happen each month and year meant I had to redo tests over and over again. In all I did over twenty blood tests, six physical biopsies, one MRI biopsy, years of prescribed medications, coupled with the nasty, (sometimes one-of-a-kind) side effect. One medication lowered my physical voice to the point where I hated to talk over the phone. How about the feeling as if someone had "poured cement into your nostrils", to completely congest it. Quoting a review to which I concurred entirely. Ad infinitum, that's what I would say were the list of ill effects from any one of the numerous medications.

Worse of all are the thousands of non-pharmaceutical remedies, none of which is cheap and still questionable as to their efficacy and effectiveness. In desperation, I tried a number of them. And in despair, I cursed at each one that failed to deliver.

I kid you not, that one Urologist had suggested to me to STOP any further tests and any attempts to find out the state of my prostate and to just keep living on till the end came. His theory was that, since none of the surgical therapies was appropriate for my size, and since no new medications were appearing on the scene, my best approach was to just wait for which would come first; natural demise or the prostate shutdown.

And I say, not to worry, 'God's time is always the best'.

To summarize; I had been diagnosed with enlarged prostate. Extreme BPH – over twenty years and counting. The size and volume made it impossible for any of the fifteen or so surgical therapies to touch me. The main prescriptions had outlived their efficacies, and now causing more harm than good. I had to plan my every trip outside the home around rest-stops, portable toilets, gas stations, restaurants and personal urinals. I had to balance any of those with the level of hydration I would tolerate. I had written to a number of town officials about the number of portable restrooms around my town, considering the irony that I do miles of outdoor walking each day.

And I still believe that, 'God's time is always the best'. So, one day during my appointed annual physical with my urologist, I brought a picture of a brand-new combination prescription intended for candidates like me who were at their wits end on BPH medication. Doctor didn't even blink on seeing my screen shot. "No", he said; "*not for you. You've been on meds for too long, you are up there in age, and this will not help you in any way. Over the Covid years, something else has come on the scene that is EXACTLY made for you*". The exact words of my doctor.

And that something new, he said, was 'AQUABLATION'. Immediately, I set out to find out everything I could about this new therapy. Meanwhile, I worked with the surgical coordinator for appointment date for me. I broadcast this information to anyone who would listen to me – in most cases on text messages, phone messages and personal and face to face, where necessary. It is the set of events that started from January this year through March, April, May and ending on September 7, 2023 that is so divine and so personally inspirational.

The story of Aquablation starts with the original inventor, Nikolai Aljuri. With PhD in Medical Physics from the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Science and Technology at MIT, this is the hand of God that worked through a much younger person to rescue potentially, millions of men with similar situation I found myself in.

The miracle of Aquablation is its ability to treat BPH regardless of size. Reading from various literatures on the tool, it is almost, to me, as the biggest gift I ever received in any particular year. It is so unique – being the only BPH therapy that combines a camera and ultrasound imaging, giving the doctor a view of the entire prostate in real time. With that, the doctor can plot the exact tissue to remove using heat-free waterjet controlled by robotic technology.

Most reviews of the therapy talks about the ease with which things happen and the patient walks away in a few days and back on their feet in a few weeks. Not so fast for me. My BPH was not average and my situation was not typical. Five weeks after initial surgery, I was back in the Operating Room for another procedure to correct an issue. All in all, the BEST time happened to be this 2023 when the new Aquablation Therapy had become available in Middletown and my personal Urologist recognized the cut-off age that I was on, recommended it for me and dutifully operated on me twice within 5 weeks until, I became a new man.

No other time would have worked. No other circumstance would have worked. The exact timing with four postponements and a pre-Covid infection as well as numerous pre-op tests that all went fine with flying colors made me a believer that, the BEST time for your eventual relief is when God had His hands in it.

Kwame6@att.net

### Question: "Is the ACTS formula for prayer a good way to pray?"

**Answer:** The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. *ACTS* is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), except for thanksgiving.

The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

**Adoration** – The *A* in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

**Confession** – The *C* in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word *confess* means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

**Thanksgiving** – The *T* represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

**Supplication** – The *S* stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others’ needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is the ACTS formula for prayer biblical? The acronym itself isn’t found in the Bible, but it can serve as a guide, especially when we are learning how to pray. Remember, prayer isn’t a formula, and each prayer doesn’t have to cover every type of prayer. God wants us to talk from our hearts and express ourselves to Him. As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him more.



### Question: "What is the five-finger prayer?"

**Answer:** The five-finger prayer is a method to help people remember categories of people to pray for. It is a memory device used as an aid to prayer.

**The little finger**, or the pinkie, is the smallest finger, and it represents the individual who is praying. We need to pray for ourselves, but in humility we need to remember that we are the least important.

**The ring finger** this is usually the weakest of our fingers, and it reminds us to pray for the weak and the sick among us.

**The middle finger** is the tallest finger, and it reminds us to pray for our leaders.

**The pointer finger**, or the index finger, reminds us to pray for people who point the way—teachers and church leaders.

**The thumb** is the thickest and strongest digit, and when the hand is at rest, the thumb is the nearest to the rest of the body, reminding us to pray for family and friends—people who are closest to us.

The five-finger prayer has been popularized by Pope Francis. There is nothing specifically Roman Catholic about the five-finger prayer; it is simply one method to help people remember whom to pray for, similar to a prayer list. Since we all have our hands with us, the reminder of those in need of prayer is constant.

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**ONE DOOR FOR ALL**

**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.  
Romans 10:13**

The protocols at the restaurant in my childhood neighborhood were consistent with social and racial dynamics in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The kitchen helpers—Mary, the cook, and dishwashers like me—were Black; however, the in-restaurant patrons were White. Black customers could order food, but they had to pick it up at the back door. Such policies reinforced the unequal treatment of Blacks in that era. Though we've come a long way since then, we still have room for growth in how we relate to each other as people made in the image of God.

Passages of Scripture like Romans 10:8-13 help us to see that all are welcome in the family of God: there's no back door. All enter the same way—through belief in Jesus' death for cleaning and forgiveness. The biblical word for this transformative experience is saved (VV. 9, 13). Your social situation or racial status or that of others doesn't factor into the equation. "As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame.' For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him" (VV. 11-12). Do you believe in your heart the Bible's message about Jesus? Welcome to the family! Arthur Jackson

**What evidence is there in your life that you've believed the Bible's message about forgiveness through Jesus? Who do you know that needs to hear the good news about Christ?**

Father, my heart rejoices that You so loved the world that You sent Jesus.

Learn more about forgiveness through Jesus at [odb.org/personal-relationship-with-god/](http://odb.org/personal-relationship-with-god/).

Today's Scripture: **Romans 10:8-13**

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: <sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As Scripture says, "Anyone who believe in him will never be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup> for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

**INSIGHT**

After declaring that we're all sinners (Romans 1-3), Paul explains how God justifies us through Christ's death on the cross (CHS. 4-8). In chapters 9-11, he explains that many Jews are still not saved because they've rejected God's way of salvation and maintain that they must meticulously keep the law to have a right relationship with Him (10:3-4). Paul explains, "People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood" (3:25 NLT). The apostle calls these Jewish brothers and sisters—and everyone—to believe in Christ: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (10:9). God's way of salvation is the same for all people—whether Jews or gentiles (V. 12): "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (V. 13). K. T. Sim

**A THANKSGIVING BLESSING**

**When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.**

In 2016, Wanda Dench sent a text inviting her grandson to Thanksgiving dinner, not knowing he'd recently changed his phone number. The text instead went to a stranger, Jamal. Jamal didn't have plans, and so, after clarifying who he was, asked if he could still come to dinner. Wanda said, "Of course you can." Jamal joined the family dinner in what has since become a yearly tradition for him. A mistaken invitation became an annual blessing.

Wanda's kindness in inviting a stranger to dinner reminds me of Jesus' encouragement in Luke's gospel. During a dinner party at a "prominent" Pharisee's house (Luke 14:1), Jesus noticed who was invited and how the guests jostled for the best seats (V. 7). Jesus told His host that inviting people based on what they could do for him in return (V. 12) meant the blessing would be limited. Instead, Jesus told the host that extending hospitality to people without the resources to repay him would bring even greater blessing (V. 14).

For Wanda, inviting Jamal to join her family for Thanksgiving dinner resulted in the unexpected blessing of a lasting friendship that was a great encouragement to her after her husband's death. When we reach out to others, not because of what we might receive, but because of God's love flowing through us, we receive far greater blessing and encouragement. Lisa M. Samra

**When has an unexpected invitation encouraged you? What blessings did you experience?**

Heavenly Father, may my invitations reflect a heart that wants to bless others as You lead me.

For further study, read Giving it Away at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0920](http://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0920).

Today's Scripture: **Luke 14:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

**INSIGHT**

Jesus' instruction to invite the poor and the outcast to a meal (Luke 14:12-14) is something God wanted the Israelites to do. God commanded His people not to mistreat or oppress the poor, the widows, the orphans, and foreigners living in their midst but instead to love them (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33; Deuteronomy 10:19). Even as the Jews were blessed with material prosperity so they could enjoy the good life, they were commanded to be generous and share with others. They were to include the foreigner and the poor in their celebrations and feasts (Deuteronomy 16:9-12; 26:8-11) and to give a tithe to share God's provisions and abundance with them (26:12). The Israelites were to treat foreigners as if they were native-born Jews and love them as they'd love themselves (Leviticus 19:34; 24:22; Deuteronomy 27:19).

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**YOUR  
LIFE  
IS GOD'S  
GIFT TO YOU  
WHAT YOU DO  
WITH IT  
IS YOUR  
GIFT  
BACK  
TO  
GOD**

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Father, we ask for Your guidance as we do Your will for our lives. Show us the right path and direct us to the road You have prepared for Your people. Lead us also to Your truth and teach us, for You are the God who saves. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CROSSMAP **PRAYERS**

### Realize the Power Within You

Realize the power that is within you, and you will no longer be the victim of a depressed spirit.

And what is this inner power? Simply the God-given ability to believe.

To the extent to which you develop this faculty, you will master the defeats in your life.

The great issue is to learn to believe.

This is stated in one of the most important of all Scripture passages: **Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Mark 9:23**

Learn to believe. Learn to cast out doubt. This is done by the practice of affirmation.

Affirm faith, think positively, visualize achievement. Never think doubt. Always think faith.

This text affirms that when you learn to believe, the area of the impossible is vastly reduced and the area of the possible is greatly increased.

If you set this text firmly at the center of your thought patterns, you will never again be a victim of low spirits.

---

### What Christ Can Do for You

We read in the Bible of the marvelous things Jesus did for people---and wish that the same experience might be ours. Through faith in Jesus Christ, they were able to accomplish the most astonishing achievements, or were rescued from sad plights or gained tremendous new power over difficulties.

Rather sadly we ask, "Why can't that happen to me?"

It can, and as proof I urge you to meditate upon this tremendous Spirit Lifter: **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8**

The simple truth stated here is that Jesus Christ never changes. He is an invariable factor in a variable world. He is just the same now as when He walked the shores of Galilee. He has the same kindness, the same power to heal and change men's lives. He is the same restorer of courage, the same transformer of people's souls.

Any things that He ever did for anyone throughout all history, He can do for you. It all depends upon how completely you surrender yourself Him---and how sincerely you believe.

---

### Greatest Blessings

How can you obtain the things that make life rich and filled with peace, material necessities and right relationships? Jesus tells us how: **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

We are told to have God's righteousness or rightmindedness. Develop a right thought pattern. Right thinking, governed by intelligence, is positive not negative, unselfish not self-centered, creative not destructive, kindly not hateful.

Employ these attitudes and everything that you need for the good life will be multiplied for you.

---

### You Are Never Alone

**Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Genesis 28:15**

Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go on in whatever situation you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through.

---

### Depression Lifted

Many are sick because they are basically unhappy. For this condition a medicine is offered in these words: **A merry heart does good, like medicine... Proverbs 17:22**

Joy has healing value, but gloom is sickening. This is why Jesus so emphatically tells us to rejoice. Learn to live joyfully. Take a hopeful and optimistic attitude. Think happy thoughts, say happy things and put joy into people's lives. The more you do this, the more surely you will keep your own spirits high.

---

### Clean Mind and High Spirits

**You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. John 15:3**

This Spirit Lifter tells us that the word of Jesus Christ, when recorded in consciousness and held there, can make you clean of all guilt. How? The answer is by forgiveness from wrong thoughts and actions, by changing thoughts from impure to wholesome thinking, by filling the mind with faith so you experience a truly marvelous brain-and-soul-washing.

The ugliness of hate is washed from the mind; all sin are forgiven. The inner cleanness thus gained is an amazing source of high spirits.

---

### You Are Stronger Than You Think

Scarcely any joy equals this realization: You have it in you to meet all your responsibilities. This consciousness contributes immeasurably to high spirit and happiness. Is difficult to face each day with a sense of inability and weakness. With such an attitude, life seems too much, and discouragement sets in.

Here is the antidote for such a dismal feeling: **Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10**

This is a most important promise God makes to us. No matter how overwhelming your problem, you need have no fear. You are not to let anything dismay you, for God says He will strengthen and help you. In fact, He promises He will hold you up and make you adequate for any situation.

Accept this great fact. Hold this verse strongly in your consciousness until it sends its rugged courage throughout your entire life.

“

*In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.*

*I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.*

*I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.*

*If God be for me, who can be against me?*

*I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.*

*My enemies are fleeing before me.*

*God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.*

*He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.*

*I am the head and not the tail.*

*He has given me power to make wealth.*

*I dwell in the secret place.*

*I have His protection and provision.*

*God is my refuge, my fortress.*

*I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.*

*No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.*

*God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands*

*lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.*

*1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.*

*I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

*1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.*

*Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,  
or any other disease cannot enter my body.*

*I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,*

*the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.*

*“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgment You shall condemn.*

*This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,*

*and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.*

*I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.*

*Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them  
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.*

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!*

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNREASONABLE  
AND SELF-CENTERED.

**FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.**

IF YOU ARE KIND, PEOPLE MAY  
ACCUSE YOU OF ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

**BE KIND ANYWAY.**

IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, YOU WILL WIN  
SOME FALSE FRIENDS AND SOME TRUE ENEMIES

**SUCCEED ANYWAY.**

WHAT YOU SPEND YEARS BUILDING  
SOMEONE CAN DESTROY OVERNIGHT

**BUILD ANYWAY.**

IF YOU ARE HONEST,  
PEOPLE MAY CHEAT YOU.

**BE HONEST ANYWAY.**

IF YOU FIND HAPPINESS,  
PEOPLE MAY BE JEALOUS.

**BE HAPPY ANYWAY.**

THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY MAY  
BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW.

**DO GOOD ANYWAY.**

GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU HAVE  
AND IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH.

**GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.**

FOR YOU SEE, IN THE END,  
IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.

**IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN  
YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.**

-MOTHER THERESA



## THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

**I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...**

**WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHEL-ANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!**

**AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND."**

**"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."**

**BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE.**

**SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.**

**IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.**

**BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."**

**AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.**

**BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.**

**SOURCE UNKNOWN**

**Know God's Character**

**O taste and see that the LORD is good: Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Psalm 34:8**

It's important that we know God's character. Why? It gives us discernment. If we don't know the character of God, how can we ever know who is from God and who is not from God? Here are three character traits of God that help me stay in tune with who He is and what He is doing: 1. Justice: God is a God of justice. That word justice is so awesome because it means that He will always make anything that's wrong right. This helps me to not worry when I am mistreated because I know God will bring justice. It's who He is, 2. Goodness: God is good, this fact never changes. And He's good all the time, not just once in a while or when things go your way. Psalm 34:8 says, "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him" (NIV). When things are bad, I

find great encouragement in God's goodness. 3. Holiness: God is holy and righteous, and He desires to make us holy, pure and clean, free from the defilements of sin. To be honest, it has helped me in my walk with God to realize that whatever He does is right, whether I like it or not. This helps me to stay in sync with Him. These three traits are not the only characteristics of God, but they are some of the most significant and powerful ones to me. I encourage you to spend some time looking up these traits, and other traits of God that are important to you. When you study who He is, the Holy Spirit will help you incorporate His traits into your own personality. Begin to practice them in your daily life, and see what God does... You won't be disappointed.

**Prayer Starter:** God, You are wonderful. Your justice, goodness, holiness, and countless other traits amaze me and remind me of how great You are. Continue to remind me of Your character so I can become more like You.

**The Evidence of the Holy Spirit**

**And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31**

There are too many unhappy born-again, Spirit-filled believers who don't know what it's like to remain full of the Spirit of God by acknowledging Him and pursuing His ways daily. The Holy Spirit is in them, but they don't let the evidence of it show up in their normal, day-to-day life. It is possible to fill a glass with water without filling it to full capacity. Likewise, when we are born again we have the Holy Spirit in us, but we

may not yet be totally filled and have the evidence of His power in our lives. Acts 4:31 reports that when people were filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke the word of God "with freedom and boldness and courage." It does not please God when people leave Him out of their daily lives and then follow religious formulas to try to appease Him. Instead, He wants us to live the Spirit-filled life of freedom, boldness and courage. I urge you to let God work freely in every area of your life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Prayer Starter:** God, I want to be filled with the holy Spirit every day. Help me to live with the freedom, boldness and courage You give in my daily life.

**Receiving the Holy Spirit**

**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8**

In Acts 1:8 Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will also come upon us, giving us power (ability, efficiency and might) to be Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth. Many Christians follows all the "right" rules, but wonder: "Is this all there is?" As a young Christians, I experienced that same emptiness. Doing the right things brought temporary happiness but not deep, satisfying joy. I cried out: "God, something is missing! To my surprise, I heard the audible voice of God and I knew He was about to move in my life. Only a few hours later Jesus filled me with the presence of the Holy Spirit in a way that I had

never before experienced, and everything changed. I felt His power in my life in a new way. When you spend time with God daily and receive His Holy Spirit, you're not signing up for a scary, weird experience. You are simply receiving His power to be more like Jesus and His wisdom to walk through ordinary events. Don't be afraid of new things, just make sure they are biblical. I believe that God desires to take you to new heights in Him through the power of daily interaction with His Holy Spirit. He is knocking at the door of your heart. Will you open it wide and welcome Him?

**Prayer Starter:** God, I want to live as a Christian who is filled with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Show me how to live in the deep, satisfying joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. I thank You for the power and wisdom to walk through every day and every situation.

**Take God Out of the "Emergency Only" Box!**

**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Corinthian 3:16**

I used to spend time with God once in awhile or when my life was in big trouble. Eventually I learned that if I ever wanted to stop living from one emergency to the next, I needed to seek God every day as if I were in desperate need of Him. It's true that God will always help us when we come to Him. But if we want constant victory, we need to take God out of our "emergency only" box and invite Him into our everyday lives. God wants us to get personal with Him. He proves this by the

fact that He lives within us. When Jesus died on the cross, He opened the way for us to get personal with almighty God. If God had wanted an "emergency only" relationship, He might just visit on occasion, but He certainly would not have come to take up permanent residence within us. What an awesome thought! God is your personal friend! Will you remove Him from the "emergency only" box today?

**Prayer Starter:** Lord, I know that the Christian life is so much more than an "emergency only" back-up plan. Because You live within me, I want to know You as a personal friend. Rather than just calling on You when I'm in trouble, I want to seek You every single day.

**Old Testament**

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library. There are four types of writing in the Old Testament: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

**LAW**

**Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.**

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

**HISTORY**

**Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.**

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

**POETRY**

**Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.**

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

**PROPHECY**

**Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.**

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor

**New Testament**

There are 27 books in the New Testament library. There are three types of writing in the New Testament: History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

**HISTORY**

**Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts**

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

**LETTERS**

**PAUL'S LETTERS**

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

**OTHER LETTERS**

**Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.**

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

**PHOPHECY**

**Revelation**

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



## THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

Today Scripture: **Luke 2:1-7**

***You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,...out of you will come...one who will be ruler over Israel. Micah 5:2***

In November 1962, physicist John W. Mauchly said, "There is no reason to suppose the average boy or girl cannot be master of a personal computer." Mauchly's prediction seemed remarkable at the time, but it proved astonishingly accurate. Today, using a computer or handheld device is one of the earliest skills a child learns.

While Mauchly's prediction has come true, so have much more important predictions—those made in Scripture about the coming of Christ. For example, Micah 5:2 declared, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." God sent Jesus, who arrived in tiny Bethlehem—marking him as from the royal line of David (See Luke 2:4-7).

The same Bible that accurately predicted the first coming of Jesus also promises His return (Acts 1:11). Jesus promised His first followers that He would come back for them (John 14:1-4).

This Christmas, as we ponder the accurately predicted facts surrounding the birth of Jesus, may we also consider His promised return, and allow Him to prepare us for that majestic moment when we see Him face to face!  
Bill Crowder

**How might you respond in worship to the truth of the prophecies of Christ's birth? How does His promise to return for us impact your decision-making?**

Loving Father, I'm so grateful for the birth of Jesus and His mission of rescue and redemption. Thank You for His certain return for me

<sup>1</sup> In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no great room available for them.

### INSIGHT

Jesus' birth recorded in Luke 2:1-7 was prophesied in Micah 5:2. Along with this prophecy, the old Testament contains many other prophecies about His birth and life. In Isaiah 7:14, we read, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." Moreover, Christ would "proclaim good news to the poor" (61:) and bring miraculous healing (35:5-6; 42:7-9). Also in Isaiah, we about Jesus' suffering and purpose: "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (53:5). Zechariah prophesied the events of Palm Sunday, that the "king" (Jesus) would come "lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). And, again in Zechariah, Judas' betrayal is foretold (11:12-13). Finally, Christ kingdom will be everlasting (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:29; Isaiah 9:7).

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**Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606**

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day.  
Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

**PLEASE** dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

**CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY**

***We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?***

**Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way**

For more information contact:  
Church office 860-344-9527.or  
Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

**I am praying  
for everyone who  
needs a miracle.**

Only God can do the impossible, He can make a way when there seems to be no way. Today I pray God touches your health, your home, your family, your faith and your finances. Amen.

**Love the Lord  
your God**

with all your

**heart**

& with all your

**soul**

& with all your

**strength**

Deuteronomy 6:5



myfaithradio.com

**When you need,  
God knows.  
When you ask,  
God listens.  
When you believe,  
God works.  
When you thank,  
God gives more.**

The greatest Christmas gift

*ever given*

wasn't placed under the tree,

He was placed

on the Tree

and His name is

*Jesus*

# 200th Year Church Anniversary Celebration 1823-2023

## The Vision Statement in four simple words:

These words are expressing the minimum expectations of members

### Members are to **GATHER**

Every member should attend faithfully a worship service every week. Christians are commanded to worship the Lord together. Read Acts 2:42-47. not only are we called to worship the Lord, but we are also to encourage one another when we gather together.

### Members are to **CONNECT**

That's the word picture to describe locking hands and arms with others. We are called to connect together in a small group (ministry, organizations, class leader system, bible study, Sunday school, and others).

### Members are to **GO**

The members should be involved in at least one ministry in the church each year. Many should be involved in ministries that got them involved outside the walls of the church. The Great Commission should be at the heart of what we do as part of the process of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).

### Members are to **GIVE**

Every member should be a regular and faithful financial giver to the church. Jesus, Himself, said it best: *"wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be"* (Matthew 6:21).

#### CROSS STREET PASTORS: 1823 TO PRESENT

JEHIEL E. BEAMON  
WILLIAM JONES  
H.W. HUTCHINGS  
MOSES MONZINGO  
G.H.S. BELL  
WILLIAM J. SMITH  
I.T. BATTLE  
SAMUEL ROBERSON  
J.C. LODGE  
J.B. SMALL

S.W. WELLER  
E. HORTON BROWN  
E. GEORGE BIDDLE  
GEORGE F. GREEN  
MARSHALL M. SMITH  
REV. COLEMAN  
THOMAS RIDDICK  
WILLIAM DAVAGE  
DAVID FOGG  
GEORGE C. BATTLE

HEZEKIAH WILLIAMS  
N. ROOSEVELT SCOTT  
DOUGLAS LAWRENCE  
MOSES L. HARVILL



#### 2007-Now

In May of 1993, the Rt. Reverend George W.C. Walker, Sr., appointed the Reverend Moses L. Harvill as the Pastor of the Cross Street Church. Under his leadership the Church continues to grow spiritually, numerically, and financially. The Church and parsonage mortgages have been liquidated

On December 23, 2007, we rejoice in the miracle on West and Wadsworth Street by opening the doors to the New Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

On April 20, 2008, Cross Street celebrated the 185<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary and the dedication Celebration of the New Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

The Right Reverend George E. Battle, Presiding Bishop and Mrs. Iris Miller Battle, Missionary Supervisor was so very thankful that God has afforded us the opportunity to share and participate in this auspicious occasion. Look at what God has entrusted to the members of this Church; to the community in the City of Middletown; to the State of Connecticut; and especially to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. My heart and I pray that your hearts cannot fully express the gratitude we feel for how God has provided and for how He has worked through all of us to meet the needs of those we now serve and the many who will come that we will assuredly serve in the future.

#### 1829-1929

The original church was built in 1829. The members purchased land from a Mr. Henry Paddock and the church was constructed on Cross Street, which at this time faced Mt Vernon Street currently the site of the Science Center of Wesleyan University

#### 1929-2007

In 1929, the church was moved to its present site due to the realignment of Cross Street. It was during this move that the church was named Cross Street. Under the leadership of 12 ministers, many renovations were accomplished. However in 1978, the 1867 church structure was torn down and a new building constructed on the same site under the leadership of Reverend Douglas Lawrence.



## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

### Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School**  
(see Sunday Church School)  
10:00 p.m. **Worship Service**  
<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>  
Meeting ID: 959 628 798  
(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from  
across the Country.  
We can be watched worldwide.

### Tuesday

#### Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/562367770>  
(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

### Wednesday

#### Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. &  
6:00 P.M.  
Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

### Sunday Church School

**8:00 a.m. – 08:45 a.m.**  
**Adults**

Call-in only: 978-990-5105  
Code: 204730#  
Sister Sylvia Pina / Brother Ken  
Simmons

**10:00 a.m. – 10:45 am**  
**Children: ages 3-12:**

In person, Fellowship Hall  
Ms. Carolyn Smith / Rev. Grant.

**3:00 pm—3:34 pm**  
**Children: ages 9-12**

Call-in: 929-205-6099, Code:  
614890401#.

or

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401#>  
Rev. Grant teacher

Any questions call: 860-490-3199  
Gloria Malloy, Church School  
Superintendent.

#### We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

- Online: [crosstreetamezion.org](https://crosstreetamezion.org)  
1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/TJXKDEVIXE>)  
2. Text 73256 (Thecross)  
3. PayPal,  
4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440  
5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct

- 06457,  
6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.  
7. Call the office for someone to pick up  
8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the  
website; <http://www.crosstreetamezion.org/Give>)

## Sanctuary Guidelines

There will be one service at 10:00 A.M. The doors will open at 9:45 A.M. to begin temperature check-in. As you enter the building, we request you to sanitize your hands.

If you choose to worship in the Sanctuary, there will be one entrance open, the main doors in the front of the building. The committee and I ask that you follow the guidelines for seating. The pews and floor will be marked to help you do this.

We also kindly request all persons attending to wear a mask over their mouth and nose to prevent the possible spread of illness to the most vulnerable among us. Masks are not required for those under the age of two or for persons unable to remove their masks.

I understand that there has been considerable discussion about masks. Since the scriptures are, of course, silent on the matter, I do not think we need to agree on the substance of the question. It is a matter of personal conscience. However, since some of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters would experience a great deal

of anxiety worshipping with a group of people who are not wearing masks, I ask that you consent to wear a mask for their sake (see 1 Corinthians 8-9 for the principle).

**Worship Outside:** If you prefer to worship outdoors, there will be designated parking and an outside speaker, and you can listen on radio frequency 89.3 F.M. and watch on your phone via zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. During Communion, someone will bring the sacrament to you.

**Livestream Worship:** Finally, we will continue to live-stream the 10:00 A.M. service so that you can watch from your home. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of a new illness, including fatigue, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, cough, or nausea, please make use of the live stream and consider contacting your healthcare provider.

**Other Precautions:**  
Since studies seem inconclusive on whether singing increases the risk for viral spread, and since we want to

exercise an abundance of caution at this point in re-opening, if you choose to join the worship and praise team in singing, please keep on your mask.

#### Please refrain from shaking hands and embracing one another at this time.

I understand that some of these precautions may feel burdensome. They are temporary, and, even so, I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for bringing us back together again and ask him to provide us with patience and kindness for each other.

Much Love to All. Faithfully Yours,  
Pastor Harvill

**Special Note:** For now, we will have service in the Sanctuary every other Sunday (First and 3rd) and 2nd and fourth in the parking lot only, along with Live streaming.

**Please let us know by phone call, letter, or email what else we can do to help you become comfortable returning to in-person worship.**

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: [crosstreetamezion.org](https://crosstreetamezion.org) & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: [ken462012@gmail.com](mailto:ken462012@gmail.com). If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons ([ken462012@gmail.com](mailto:ken462012@gmail.com)), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



### CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223  
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net  
www.crossstreetamezion.org

**Sunday School — See Page 31**  
**Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.**

**Rev. Robyn M Anderson**  
Pastor

Email: revrmanderson@gmail.com

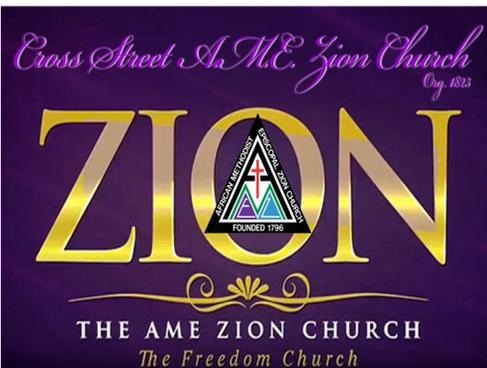
**The Rev. Moses L. Harvill,**  
Presiding Elder

**Mrs. D. Diane Proctor**  
Missionary Supervisor

**The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor**  
Presiding Prelate

#### Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson
- Rev. William D. Wilson
- Rev. Ella Frances Perry
- Rev. Karen Nesmith
- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



## Vision: "Level-Up"

GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE

### "I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."  
I'm whispering "I was lost,  
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble  
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak  
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed  
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches  
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not holier than thou.  
I'm just a simple sinner  
Who received God's good grace,  
somehow!

### The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom  
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it  
is in heaven. Give us this day our  
daily bread. And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors. And lead  
us not into temptation, but deliver us  
from evil: For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory, for  
ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:  
Write the vision and make it plain on  
tablets, that he may run who reads it.  
Habakkuk 2:2

### The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel  
saying, "Oh, that You would bless me  
indeed, and enlarge my territory,  
that Your hand would keep me from  
evil, that I may not cause pain!" So  
God granted him what he requested.  
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

### "God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-  
ful, and sharper than any two-edged  
sword, piercing even to the dividing  
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the  
joints and marrow, and is a discerner of  
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*  
Hebrews 4:12

**Prayer:** Forever, O Lord, your Word is  
settled in heaven. I bless you because  
you have given me rest according to  
all that you have promised to me. Not  
one word of all your good promises  
has ever failed. In light of this truth, I  
will walk in your Word at all times.  
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp  
unto my feet, and a light unto my  
path. All of your words are pure, O  
God, and you are a shield to me. Lord

God, your way is perfect, and your  
Word is tried. You are a shield and a  
mighty buckler to me as I trust in you.  
With your Word you made the heav-  
ens, O Lord. all of your promises are  
yes in Christ, unto your glory, O God.  
You have spoken through your Word  
since ancient times, in order to give  
light to those who sit in darkness, and  
you guide my feet in the way of peace.  
Your Word is quick, alive, and power-  
ful, and sharper than any two-edged  
sword. It pierces even to the dividing  
asunder of my soul and spirit, and of  
my joints and marrow, and is a dis-  
cerner of the thoughts and intents of  
my heart.  
Father, I am thankful for your Word,  
and I will endeavor to walk in the light  
of your Word all the days of my life.

**If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???**

### Doxology

*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*  
Jude 24-25