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**INSIDE**

- *From the Pastor's Desk*
- *Advent Season*
- *The RESOURCE Pages*
- *Thanksgiving*
- *Health Matters*
- *Spotlight*
- *And More...*

## *Pastor Appreciation Day*

**Pastor & People Together as ONE in CHRIST**  
by the **VOICE** Newsletter Staff

**T**he Pastor Appreciation Day is a time set aside so that members of a congregation can express, individually and collectively, their love and appreciation for their Shepherd. On Sunday, November 7, the Rising Mount Zion Baptist church family and friends honored their beloved Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III, who is celebrating eighteen (18) years of dedicated service as Pastor and People.

First and foremost, the Zion church family reverently acknowledges and is eternally grateful to our Omniscient God for sending to us one of His chosen sons and for uniting Pastor and People in this holy marriage. This consecrated marriage doesn't take anything for granted. Therefore, a concerted effort is made to always embrace the true spirit, love, and character of God, and to be guided by His divine Word in our daily living. Pastor Cooper is an anointed, academically prepared, and a compassionate, purpose-driven, and prolific Shepherd, Pastor, and leader; and has monumentally progressed beyond

measure the spiritual, numerical, financial, social, and physical growth of this church. During the worldwide COVID 19 shut-down, Pastor Cooper immediately and diligently

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**When you feel grateful for something others have done for you, why not tell them?**

*We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV)*



proffered online three nights of spiritual programs of evangelism that nurtured the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of the church membership, friends, and even people throughout the country. Each second Sunday, he led the Communion ritual that was held on the church parking lot and provided opportunities for members and friends to commune in spirit and in truth. His online programs appealed to thousands of listeners each week, and more than two dozen persons submitted an Invitation to Christian Discipleship form online during the shut-down. In addition, Pastor Cooper was totally attentive to his flock-- calling, visiting, counseling, and praying for the known sick and the bereaved/afflicted families, eulogizing members, family and/or friends on a weekly basis, counseling couples, and performing several marriages. Since returning to our edifice an average of 200 worshipers per week has attended; and more than a dozen persons have submitted Christian Discipleship applications during in-person worship. It is evident that Pastor Cooper's selfless actions have provided a blessed, inspiring, and welcoming atmosphere for the weary and isolated souls to be able to continue a close relationship with God, families, and friends. His caring spirit is a blessing and makes a notable impact on so many families!



The Rev. Dr. Kevin L. Sykes, Senior Pastor of the St. James Baptist Church was warmly welcomed as the guest evangelist for the Sunday morning worship hour. His worshipful spirit was obvious as he chose his basic scriptural reading, *Ezekiel 3:14-17*, entitled his sermon, "Somebody Ought to Say Something - *How to Pick up the Pieces*", and delivered a well-received, blessed, potent, and inspirational message. Rev. Sykes stated that "We shouldn't ever get so holy that we don't care, don't have compassion for others, or stop being available to God." He boldly reiterated to always seek God to help you put the pieces back together!

The Zion family and friends expressed their love, appreciation and gratification for their leader by overwhelmingly blessing him with copious monetary offerings, best wishes, and other physical accolades and gifts. A Pastor Appreciation Day banner will remain displayed on the church front lawn through the end of year.

What a serene, but loudly acclaimed celebration for a beloved, an appreciated, and ever-present Pastor, Teacher, and Leader—**Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III!!!**





*Dear Zion Family!*

Blessed, and highly grateful to have endured a challenging year, I humbly greet you, my Zion family and friends, anchored in my faith in the Sovereign God, the One who orders my steps in His Will, His Way, and His Word. Our experiences have brought us closer to one another and to our Lord Savior Jesus Christ who redeemed us and helped us to realize that no matter our predicament, He is still good, in control, and worthy to be praised. Life has a way of producing dark moments in our lives in which we may suffer a temporary eclipse of faith that's merely a period of human weakness. It reminds us that the trip from the mountaintop to the cave is short because in a flash, God can turn our world upside down. Yet, with a quiet murmur, He can do what an earthquake, a tornado, fire, or flood can't do---make peace, ease our burdens, deliver us, uphold us and give us the energy and confidence to go on. As people of faith, God wants to work through our faith in Him to empower love, renew hope, banish despair, protect the weak, and instruct our mind, defending it from vain imaginations and shielding our heart from fatal attractions. That's why our faith is poignant because it finds a way where there seems to be no way, igniting courage, and serving as a vehicle to fulfill of all our hopes and all His promises. Our Savior sustains us with the needed faith to do His Will, to experience breakthrough in our lives, and the victory to face whatever this life may bring. You can't make me doubt Him for I am a witness of how our God can make us brave, strong, and confident, lift up our bowed down heads, and give us peace, joy, and praise in our heart. He, like no other, can liberate us from the bar-less prison of uncertainty, frustration, fear, stress, and depression. He hears us when we call for help, gives us His blessed assurance and the comforting and upholding presence of the Holy Spirit to always rescue us right on time. Therefore, you like I, should always have a praise and song on our lips and gratefulness in our heart despite our circumstances. As your pastor, in my spirit I would be a hypocrite if I only read, preach, teach, and am convicted by the Word, and not believe, practice, and live the Word. I must admit that sometimes it is easier to read and listen to God's Word than to obey it. However, God's Word, James 1:22-25, compels us to abide by it! Through our experiences, we know that our God has repeatedly exhibited a heart of redeeming love, tender grace, and divine mercy toward us, and provides all that we need. Zion, although we may experience pain that feels endless, situations that appear hopeless, or waiting that seems unbearable, Jesus invites us to trust Him, never give up hope; and to believe that He is always able, trustworthy, and within our reach! The scars of time we bear reveal the physical and mental experiences we endure. So, appreciate the God-produced scars, knowing that they represent lessons to be learned, growth in our spirituality, strength in His power, and hope for His indwelling peace! My fellow body of believers, I invite you to "Come on In", enter into the House of the Lord and don't rush out before the Benediction, the time that God wants to make peace with us and give us peace, bless, keep, make His face shine upon us, and eulogize us. On the other side of the closed door that only God can open, are blessings of unexpected praise from Him, His unparalleled protection, the unmovable position of stabilized folks, and the unlimited potential of what God is always able to do.

**THANK  
YOU  
RISING MT.  
ZION!**

***I sincerely THANK YOU for the immeasurable kindness shown to me and my family on Pastor Appreciation Day as we celebrated eighteen blissful years as Pastor and People!***

*May your **CHRISTMAS** always be the true reason to celebrate **CHRIST** in your life!  
Wishing everyone a peaceful, Merry Christmas & a blessed, prosperous and Happy New Year!*

*Be Blessed...*

*Pastor C...*

# Spratley Allen Missionary Circle

By Sister Valorie McBee



*But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31 NIV)*

As the end of the year 2021 approaches, the Spratley Allen missionaries are continuing to be grateful to God in spite of the trials and tribulations of life in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic. The missionaries faithfully remembered the sick and shut-in and the bereaved throughout the year. Donations were made to Feed-More, Housing Families First, Donors Give for students, and Henrico Education Foundation. Donations were also given to the Baptist General Convention and Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission for the hurricane and earthquake victims in Haiti. In addition, clothing, toys and books were donated for the needy.

The missionaries appreciate our pastor, Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III, who although experienced a loss in his family, was still faithful to God and his congregation by continuing to offer prayers, Bible study and God-given messages in-person and online. We also mourn several missionaries who went home to glory this past year.

The missionaries participated in online conferences and conventions sponsored by The Baptist General Convention and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission. The 2021 Mission theme for the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention was *Engage – Transform the World Through Missions*. Sub-themes included *Advocacy/Justice* (Psalm 83:3-4), *Empowerment* (Joshua 1:9) and *Evangelism* (Matthew 28:19-20). **To Serve this Present Age – Social Justice Ministry in the Black Church** was an informative session presented by Rev. Dr. Earlene Coleman, Rev. Dr. Stephanie Wilkes, Rev. Barbara Headley and Ms. Jennifer Austin, Esquire. The following important points were covered:

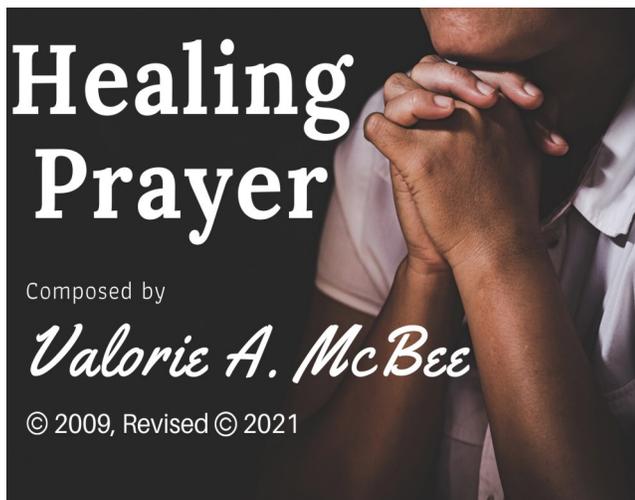
- All of God’s children do not have everything they need to fully thrive in this life. It’s important to meet people where they are to help them. However, *the question we must ask is, “What issues caused the need in the first place?”*
- The system is a strategy to keep us where we are. Laws, rules and policies are constructed within the system that are not fair or just in serving all. Psalm 83:3 states - *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people.*
- We must become engaged in social justice work. One way is by casting our votes to change policies and legislation that cause these downfalls or needs in the first place (i.e. predatory lending, relining, unfair wages, etc.). We must also support organizations that implement policies and changes – *Speak up and judge fairly. Defend the rights of the poor and needy.* (Prov. 31:9).
- **Charity** is important for meeting needs through giving, helpfulness, and benevolence.
- **Justice** challenges the issues that cause the needs in the first place. Justice is the administration and maintenance of what is just, impartial or fair. Justice is not based on skin color or social standing. Neither should justice be confused with social services – social services are charitable services based on individual needs that require repetition.
- **Social justice** involves public and group acts that offer permanent relief.

The Black Church has and must continue to play a role in social justice ministry, and to be the center of the community and beyond. The church teaches evangelism (Matthew 28:19) and may also help people emotionally, mentally, socially, financially, as well as spiritually, a comprehensive and holistic program of care. Social justice work requires reading, research, and soliciting specialists and experts in a given discipline and possibly partnering with think-tanks through universities. Joshua 1:9 advises to *be strong and courageous*. Therefore these ministries of justice can be established on numerous fronts.

1. **Pray first** on what and how a project or ministry must proceed. Movements should not begin or end in personality conflicts. Persons may try to hinder the movement or are fearful.
2. **Provide education and resources** for the congregation and the community.
3. **Provide physical capital** by providing office space or renting space for special programs.

4. **Provide intellect and human capital** – Invite attorneys, school board members, and other community leaders to discuss the issues; provide education forums. Work with at risk students (with proper permission).
5. **Social capital** – Solicit businesses and social organizations.
6. **Financial capital** – Apply for grants, or have the young people to run a business.
7. **Political capital** -- Start a 501 non-profit (separate from church, but include church persons to serve on the board) with other community leaders.
8. **Political action and awareness** - Organize advocacy and action for human rights.
9. **Collaborations** – Conduct a survey, combine efforts to include other churches.
10. **Housing ministry** – Connect people with financial advisors and experts in housing.
11. **Congregational Relationships** – Show individuals how they personally fit in and connect them to others in the church family.
12. **Teach people** how they can help themselves.
13. **By helping others we help ourselves.** “*Love thy neighbor as thyself*”. (Luke 10:25).

**OCTOBER is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.** *Yet during the COVID–19 pandemic there are many who are suffering with illnesses and facing challenges they may not have faced before. Therefore, anyone who is experiencing physical, mental, emotional or even spiritual challenges, it is hoped that this healing prayer/poem will provide some consolation. May it uplift your spirit and give you hope and inspiration, and may you experience God’s everlasting love despite what you may be going through.*



DEAR GOD, I come before You this day,  
Knowing that Your will is Your way.  
Yet, I ask in the name of Jesus,  
That You will place in me...HEALING,  
HEALING in my spirit, mind, and body.

I pray for HEALING throughout my being to  
claim, possess and feel Your goodness.  
HEALING in my heart, to feel Your love, Grace, Mercy  
and Peace.  
To know in my spirit that You are an awesome God and  
that there is nothing that You cannot do.

DEAR GOD, I ask for HEALING in my thought process;  
To meditate on Your Word, to be faithful, and to think with positivity.  
To think on love, goodness, and righteousness,  
And as a result of my thinking, I pray that my ways and actions will be pleasing in Your sight.

I ask for HEALING in my body.

I claim the physical well-being of every part of my body right now.  
For You made me in your image, and I know that You will place Your Healing Hand upon me.  
I know that my body is a temple and I ask for Your guidance on its care.

**DEAR GOD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HEALING POWER. AMEN.**

## *The Fearless, Faithful and Fallen Trees of Zion*

*By Deacon Mary Kemp*

Unlike the fallen trees in the forest, when the great trees of Zion fall, initially, there is a sense of sadness, loss, loneliness, shock, and disbelief. As followers of our Redeemer, our confidence is not put in earthly abilities, gifts, or achievements. Instead our confidence is in Jesus Christ and Him alone. For we know that when we experience troubling times, that's the time to lean most heavily on our Savior, trust in Him, and rely on Him to give us grace and mercy, and strength and deliverance in our time of need.

While each of the fallen Zion trees was here on earth, in His infinite wisdom, God gave them and gives us choices to make. He provides all the knowledge, wisdom, and guidance we need to live according to His Word and good plan, becoming flourishing, fruitful plants in His garden, or He gives us the freedom to be bound to a sinful nature, follow our own will/way, and become enslaved to the world, resembling a misplaced weed. He leaves the choice with us. It is believed that our beloved, fearless, fallen trees chose to welcome God's guidance and wisdom, put their trust in Him, and inclined their ears to listen to His voice in their daily lives. Now, we, the families and friends, left behind must remember the fruit of the Spirit. Firstly we find LOVE and secondly JOY which are an equally indispensable sign of salvation. God wants His people to be happy but this doesn't suggest that we are immune to suffering. All of us will encounter trials in this world and must look past immediate hurt to see the maturation of our faith, not rob ourselves of one of God's greatest gifts of grace. Jesus promises to give us the strength to endure our suffering, and not only to endure it, but to experience His joy in the midst of it. Ask God for His joy, rejoice in His promises, remember His faithfulness and His blessings to us, and know that He works all things out according to His Will. Following God's Will, His Way and His Word is to understand that He is our Source, our Deliverer, and our Savior.

The names of our fearless, faithful, and fallen trees of Zion are by far too numerous to name. Nonetheless, we can be assured that God knows every name and the hurt that the physical absence of each of our loved ones brings. Our Sovereign God gives us endless hope that fills our hearts with joy even when our hearts are breaking. His peace calms our spirits and surpasses all understanding. Often times when we think that all around us is darkness and earthly joys have gone, our Savior gently and quietly murmurs His promise---*Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. Psalm 23* describes the trustworthiness of our Good Shepherd. *He cares for us (v.1). He provides for our physical needs (v.2); He shows us how to live holy lives (v.3); He restores us, comforts us, heals us, and abundantly blesses us (vv. 3-5); and He will not abandon us (v.6).* Sin is no longer the boss of our faithful beloved trees of Zion. They now live in the grace and presence of Jesus whose dominion in their lives releases them from the bondage of sin.

Remembering to get close to God while we are strong and healthy prepares us to lean on Him for support and hope when those "difficult days" in life come. Without minimizing the struggles or sadness we may experience, Christ counters them with His promises of peace, joy, and ultimate victory. When we take a few moments to reflect on God's love and mercy and cast our burdens on Him, we will find in that silent God-filled space the peace that the world has taken away. Nevertheless, great peace is available in Christ, and it's more than enough to help us navigate whatever life throws at us. TRUST in God who supplies all our needs—one day at a time. When we cannot anticipate the trials of life, we can PRAY to our father who fully understands what we face and can help us through the turbulence.

*As long as we have memories, yesterday remains. As long as we have hope, tomorrow waits. As long as we have love, today is beautiful. As long as we have God, anything and everything is possible~~~ AMEN!!!*



## Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; PSALM 103:2*

**Comfort thy people for the Spirit of the Lord, thy God is upon you!** Know that at some point in life, everyone faces sickness, grief, loss and death. It is in those vulnerable, difficult and painful moments that only God's comfort can soothe a weary soul and provide the deep peace and the driving force of hope that inspire, give joy and assurance that everything is going to be all right. We must keep the faith and trust God in all situations. Daily, Pastor Cooper and the Zion family of God embrace, support, love, and pray that God blesses and keeps you in perfect peace.

- **Trustee Mark Norrell (Sister Patrice), and Sister Erika Norrell, Sister Jessika Norrell, and Brother Mark Norrell II, and the Zion Church family** mourn his father, their grandfather, and faithful Zion member, **Brother Moses A. Norrell III.**
- The Zion church family supports their Pastor, the **Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III** and his **Children** in mourning his brother and their uncle, *Brother Chadwick "Chad" Cooper.*
- **Sister Deborah S. Andrews, Brother Earl Andrews, and Sister Joyce Thompson, Sister Monica Barnette & Sister Kamesha Barnette,** and the **Zion church family** mourn their mother, their aunt and faithful member and deaconess, **Deaconess Ruth Marie A. Andrews.**
- **Sister Lisa Jones Simms (Brother James)** and **Sister Jean Johnson** mourn her mother and her relative, *Sister Barbara Jones.*
- **Sister Marie Cheek Downey (Trustee Phil), Sister Latoya D. Delamar and Brother Phio Downey** mourn her sister and their aunt, *Sister Elizabeth Cheek Davie,* of Charlotte NC.
- **Brother George Cosby (Sister Bridget), Sister Alice Tart and the Zion church family** mourn his brother, her nephew, and beloved Zion member, **Brother Tony D. Cosby**
- **Sister Glyndolyn (Gwen) Woodards Bryson, Brother William Woodards, Jr., Sister DeAnna A. Woodards,** and the **Zion church family** mourn their father, her grandfather and an inspired Zion member, **Brother William Woodards, Sr.**
- **Sister Patrice Fitzgerald** mourns her sister, *Sister Janice Fitzgerald.*
- **Brother Bobby Johnson (Deaconess Carol), Brother Anthony Rodney Johnson, and Sister Shereese F. Johnson** mourn their grandmother/grandmother-in-law, *Sister Verlina Burton (99).*
- **Deaconess Willnette R. Folly (Deacon Thomas)** mourns her brother, *Brother Herman Russell.*
- **Sister Ceresa Randolph (Brother Norman) and Sister Karen Allen** mourn her sister and her aunt, *Sister Fannie Allen.*
- **Brother Aubrey Moore (Sister Sallie) and Brother Robert Moore** mourn their uncle, *Brother Clarence Steven Watkins.*
- **Sister Sheila C. Price and Brother Damon Price** mourn their uncle, *Brother John Cunningham, Sr.*
- **Brother Clarence Miles, Jr.** mourns his brother, *Brother Walker Charity.*
- **Sister Janet Robinson (Brother Richard), and Brother Lonell Richardson** mourn her stepfather and his grandfather, *Brother Ray Spell.*
- **Sister Jackie Wilson, Sister Robin Ballard and Young Brother Zaya Anderson** mourn her sister and their aunt/great aunt, *Sister Linda Elam.*
- **Sister Barbara Garrett Moffitt (Brother Fred)** mourns her brother, *Brother Curtis Leon Hunter* of Newport News, Virginia.
- **Sister Angela D. Ketter, Sister Ivey Richardson and Sister Tranette B. LeSane,** and **Sister Angela K. Greene (Brother Clarence)** mourn her husband, their father, and her uncle, **Brother Ivan Eugene Ketter.**



# Health Matters

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD



## WHO GETS THE THIRD BOOSTER SHOT FOR THE COVID19 VACCINE? (Information Taken From CDC.gov)

It's a perfect time to think about getting the booster shot for the COVID19 vaccine if you have been previously vaccinated. The purpose of the booster shot is to help prolong the protective immunity in persons who were previously fully vaccinated. There is some evidence that protection is waning over time. Thus the booster is to help the immune system to stay revved up to protect against the COVID19 virus. However, there is not enough evidence yet supporting the need and benefit of extending boosters to everyone right now for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The booster for these 2 vaccines is currently recommended for those who may be at higher risk.

Here are the current guidelines as to who needs to get the booster injection:

- ANYONE who received the **Johnson and Johnson** vaccine is eligible for a booster at least 2 months after their first shot.
- Persons who are immunocompromised are eligible for the additional dose after 28 days have passed after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna and 28 days after the first dose of Johnson and Johnson. Immunocompromised persons include those persons who are being treated for any malignancy, have received any organ transplant, or being treated with certain immunosuppressive medications such as prednisone or other medications treating conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, Lupus, HIV infection or other agents that suppress the immune system.
- Eligible persons can receive Pfizer or Moderna booster dose 6 months or more from the time they receive the second dose and include:
  - ◊ all persons 65 years old or older,
  - ◊ 18 years and older and live in a long-term care facility,
  - ◊ 18 years old and older and have one or more underlying medical conditions
  - ◊ 18 years old and older and work or live in a high risk setting such as working in healthcare
- Underlying medical conditions that may increase a person risk of developing severe COVID19 illness include: cancer, stroke, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung disease, dementia, diabetes, heart conditions and obesity. Persons who are pregnant and those who smoke are also considered to be high risk. Having high blood pressure or hypertension alone is not considered a risk factor.

The FDA and CDC also authorized the use of “mix and match” of booster doses. This means that persons can choose which vaccine booster to receive which may be a different manufacturer from the initial vaccination. However, most experts recommend adhering to get the vaccine of the manufacturer that you started with especially if you did not experience any adverse reaction, unless it is not available. In this case it would be recommended getting the vaccine which is available.



*It remains important that as a community that we continue our fight against COVID19 by getting everyone vaccinated, continuing to wear masks and to still avoid large crowds.*



# Giving Thanks

by Rev. Blanche A. Faulk



*All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! – Psalm 145:10*

On a quiet and beautiful fall day, I sit in my favorite reading nook where I read, write, remember, and **give thanks**. As a child growing up in the Virginia capital city neighborhood called Churchill, I attended an elementary school in walking distance during a time in which being “bused” was a much talked about concept that I, as a child, did not understand. I simply trusted that the adults in my life had and would choose what was best for me.

I was not bused by the grace of God, but I was aware that many of the boys and girls I would see, play with during recess, and share school days memories with did not all look like me. Attitudes about the classroom atmosphere and persons represented in it may have changed but the end result has not. School should be a place where all people can learn. We, as parents, grand and great-grand parents are called to choose what is best, be included in the population of decision-makers, create a healthy relationship with the young, and **give thanks**. When I was young, I did not know that all families were not like mine, mom and dad and a parcel of children. I was trained up to know that we go to school to learn not just the facts and figures as tools to empower comprehension, but also, the differences and similarities to others so I would be prepared to fight the challenges before me. And to **give thanks**.

Our fight is not against the physical make-up of others, but rather against the small-mindedness, unfair judgment and bitterness that cause us to separate from the value of a wholesome relationship with others. I continue in this school of thought and **give thanks** to God because His Word daily equips and reminds us of His goodness. *Ephesians 1:3-6. -- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.* Let us **thank God** as we remember that while everyone has relationship, not everyone has fellowship--the knowledge of God’s character and His presence, omnipotence, and His love. If you believe this, **give thanks!**

Still sitting in my nook, remembering that for every mountain God has brought us over, and for every valley He’s seen us through, **give thanks!** Everyone is created by God and is an instrument for His purpose. Let us remember that and **give thanks** for it. *Psalm 136:1 – Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.*

For those of us who have already posed in our minds the millennial version of our family in the Norman Rockwell image representing Thanksgiving, be reminded for the small, big, and in-between things, and **give thanks**. Always extend help to others, be sensitive to their feelings, be kind-hearted to others, and remember that we have something to give, and in our lack, an opportunity to receive, and **give thanks** for our roles in the exchange!

This year, if the Lord is willing that we shall see another Thanksgiving Day celebration with any family, let’s look at the people who have gathered, remember those who will not share a physical presence on that day, and **GIVE THANKS** for **all** our blessings! May we forever be reminded that **God’s PRESENCE** is **His PRESENTS** to us!!!

*2 Corinthians 2:14 – But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.*

## HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

*Atlantic ---A Comprehensive Resource  
Researched & Shared by Deborah Andrews*

*Undoubtedly, we enjoy the holidays more so in our homes, than in the hospital. Therefore, this article discusses dos and don'ts of holiday safety tips that are helpful to keep in mind.*

### COMMON HOLIDAY HAZARDS

- **Watch out for your kids.** Children get excited concerning a new place, new people, or new experiences. Remember that you are likely to visit locations that are not as childproof as your home. Whether you are travelling or a guest, always be alert for potentially dangerous food, drinks, household items, toys, tools, and choking hazards. Clean up immediately after a party because kids or pets could get to hazardous alcohol, food, or decorations before you.
- **Be alert for fire hazards.** Most residential fires occur during the winter with the number of children injured or killed in home fires more than doubling. **Never** leave sources of fire or heat unattended; or use charcoal or gasoline-fuelled devices indoors.
- **Step aside for professionals and experts.** Leave the fireworks to the professionals and the grilling to the veteran barbequers of the family.
- **If you are decorating, assemble, clean, and inspect the location and all tools and equipment first.** **Never** block exits. **Never** use damaged (frayed, aged, or cracked) accessories, cords, or lighting sources, or overload on electrical outlets or cables. Plug all outdoor electronics into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFI) for extra protection. Always opt for non-flammable material for Christmas trees, Halloween or Carnival items, and Easter decorations. **Never** leave fire or heat sources unattended.



### SEASONAL SAFETY

- **Dress and behave according to the season.** Stay warm in cold temperatures; and cool down in hot environments.
- **Prepare and guard yourself according to the activity.** Be sure to know the basic rules and safety precautions for swimming, snowboarding, trick-or-treating, or hunting for chocolate eggs, and risking hyperthermia, sunburn, drowning or firework explosions.
- **Check and prepare the fireplace** before using it. **Never** burn wrapping paper, which could cause flash fires. Keep all decorations and flammable objects at least three feet away. **Always** use a sturdy and large metal screen.

### SAFE TRAVELS

- **Plan ahead.** Know where you're going and how you're going to get there. Download the latest GPA data or obtain a new map. Check for construction detours and consult the weathercaster.
- **Let a trusted person or a select trustworthy few know where you are and leave them an itinerary and your contact information.**
- **Never inform strangers of your travel plans.** Stop posting on social media.
- **Create the illusion that somebody's always home.** Notify your local police department of your time of departure and return schedule so that your home can have surveillance 24-

# The **RESOURCE** Page...

hours. Leave lights on timers scheduled to come on and go off at various times. Invest in a good surveillance doorbell system and motion exterior lighting. Leave music and/or radio playing.

- **If you are driving**, keep these holiday safety tips in mind: **Never** drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other distractions. Buckle up yourself and your family; use a car-seat for small children. If possible, travel by day or get an incredibly early start in order to avoid traffic congestion during the hours when most people go to or get off work. Keep a breakdown kit with items such as spare tires, jumper cables, fuses, flares, flashlights, batteries, blankets, water, and snacks.
- **If you are flying or using public transportation...**Travel with a friend or two to three companions, remembering that there's safety in numbers. **Always** travel with a trusted and familiar source, such as a reputable airline, bus, or train company.
- **Don't carry too much cash or valuables** on your person. Never flash large bills when making purchases. **Never** look like an expensive target.



## A VERY HEALTHY HOLIDAY

- Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.
- Get your regular check-up and vaccinations.
- Always practice good judgment.
- Drink responsibly.
- Stay active and get regular exercise.
- De-stress... Sleep and eat properly. Drink water regularly. Enjoy people and live in the moment. Pre-plan as much as possible. Have a back-up plan. Take time to exercise and relax. Settle on a positive outlook no matter what goes awry.



## HEARTY AND HARMLESS HOLIDAY FOOD

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid cross-contamination, separate raw food from cooked food.
- Cook at the proper temperature.
- Thoroughly wash raw food (fruits and vegetables).
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
- Thaw meat in the refrigerator, not the counter.
- Eat fruits and vegetables often, and limit sugary, alcoholic, and fatty food intake.
- Stuff with care. If stuffing a turkey or any other meat, prepare the stuffing and insert it at once and loosely. If cooked inside or outside the main meat, cook it to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.



**Have a Blessed & Safe Holiday!**



## SPOTLIGHT

*Daphne A. Hill*

By Ora J. Hill



*Daphne A. Hill* is the only child born to the union of Ora J. and the late James E. Hill, a native New Yorker, and a proud member of **SPRINGER NATION!**

Daphne was baptized at age 11 at First Mt. Olive Baptist Church in King and Queen County, VA and joined Bethany Baptist Church in Jamaica, NY. Having moved to Virginia in her late teens with her mother, she joined the Trinity Baptist Church under the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. A. Lincoln James, Jr., graduated from Highland Springs High School, furthered her education, and graduated from the **University of Virginia** (UVA) in Charlottesville. Since 2006 she has been a member of The St. Paul's Baptist Church under the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Lance D. Watson.

After her graduation from UVA, Daphne attended **Norfolk State University** (NSU) and earned a Master's Degree in Social Work with a Strategies (Social Administration) Concentration. She began her career with Richmond Public Schools as a School Social Worker for the Head Start Program, where she found supporting children and families in the program especially rewarding. In addition, she served as a Social Work Specialist for the Child Care Training Program and as a Trainer through the Virginia Mentoring Partnership, both through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and was a member of the 2006 cohort of the Minority Political Leadership Institute through the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at VCU.

Daphne made a career change and transferred her proficiencies from the human services to government contracting for over a decade. Her positions included serving as a Small Business Liaison Officer for Northrop Grumman Corporation on a \$2 billion contract, a Subcontracts Administrator for TASC, Inc. on a multi-million dollar Navy contract, and a Small Business Program Manager for a \$1.5 billion government contractor in the intelligence space, maintaining a top-secret level Department of Defense security clearance. While working full-time, Daphne earned a Graduate Certificate in Procurement and Contracts Management from the University of Virginia and a Master of Business Administration from the Strayer University.

In 2015, Daphne shifted from full-time employment and directed more energy to her personal and professional development company, Communicate to Elevate, LLC. In 2017, she completed the Leadership Quest program, becoming a member of "the best class EVER" through Leadership Metro Richmond. In August 2019, God revealed other plans for Daphne, a Call to Ministry. Thus, in February 2020, Daphne enrolled in Union Presbyterian Seminary (UPSem), studying to earn a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Arts in Christian Education degree. While a student at NSU, she studied under Dr. Joseph Dancy, Jr. Since graduation, she has developed a professional and counseling relationship with Dr. Dancy whose extensive academic and professional knowledge has been of great value as she progresses through the seminary challenge.



While attending UPSem, she served as a Commuter Representative with the Richmond Student Government Association. She currently serves as a student representative on the Board of Trustees, a student worker at the Seminary library and is working with the newly appointed inaugural Director for the *Baptist House of Studies*. Daphne hopes to expand her experiences to include service with the *Katie Geneva Canon Center for Womanist Leadership* where she will be able to support members of the Baptist community and other Black women both inside and outside the seminary.

Since 2001 Daphne has readily and effectively used her creative talents through her association with the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church where as a newsletter staff member she designs the quarterly published **RMZ VOICE** Newsletter.

*Congratulations & gratitude to **DAPHNE A. HILL**, a treasured and exemplary RMZ VOICE staff member, for having been chosen the spotlight person of the quarter!*

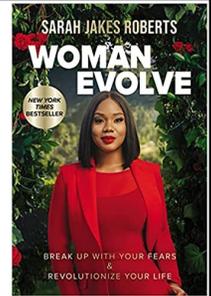
# BOOK REVIEW

## Woman Evolve

Break Up With Your Fears & Revolutionize Your Life

By Sarah Jakes Roberts

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



Sarah, the daughter of the esteemed, world-renowned T D Jakes seeks to rescue Eve, the woman who ruined God’s plan for humanity over a piece of forbidden fruit. Like most of us, Sarah admits that she had strong feelings for the woman who purportedly brought about the misery that we experience as a result of Eve’s disobedience to God’s instructions. She says compassion for Eve hit her like “a ton of bricks” during a woman’s conference where righteousness was being proclaimed by all in attendance. An epiphany befell Sarah, as she realized that we all have a bit of Eve in us. All of us can relate to having pursued a path that took us away from our moral compass, our financial, relational or other life goals at some point and time. All of us have often lacked the discipline to do what we know is the right thing to do.

Eve’s eating from the forbidden fruit did not change God’s intention for our lives; although it did change how He would fulfill the intention as a result of her error in judgement. Eve, having been formed after the earth’s creation, was thrust into a world for which she was ill-prepared. She came into the world as a fully grown woman, with everything in its place except her. She was expected to subdue the earth and control a world that she did not yet understand. Eve made a bad choice to indulge herself, despite the warning not to. This made it more challenging for her and Adam to partner with God to manifest the promised divinity, which was to be their destiny, along with our own. God gave Eve the chance to return to a place of alignment with Him when He gave the serpent the curse in *Genesis 3:15*, so that His purpose could be revealed despite the setback.

Eve is like a reflection of Sarah and many other women, who have been vilified for having made mistakes and are living their lives through the filters of fear, shame and disappointment. All of us have made poor decisions, took wrong turns that possibly changed the trajectory of our lives. In Eve’s case, the serpent used her mind against her in order to destabilize her world, to move her further away from God’s vision for her life. Her story is an example of how seeds of doubt and questions can creep into our minds and distract us from what is good and right for us. Questioning of God’s goodness and deviating from the path He sets before us can wreak calamity in our environments, such as we read about with Adam and Eve.

Because God’s implementation of His intentions for our lives will be different and more challenging as a result of the acts in the Garden of Eve, we must fight to maintain faith in God’s goodness, despite the difficulties we now must endure. We must guard our thoughts against forbidden fruit and disastrous questions that might enter our minds and push us into choices that we know will not be good for us. We must not allow the uncertainty of God’s grace to disrupt our souls and our connection to Him. We must not allow the seeds of the enemy to deter us from the plans God has for us. We are responsible for navigating the world—the good and bad—as we know it. There will be things that we cannot change. We must learn to view every day and every experience as a learning experience that could make us better and wiser.

Sarah’s hope for us is that we would seek to heal from the personal traumas that may have led us to bad choices in our own lives. If we all are healed, recovered and determined, we can collaboratively wage war on the limitations in our world. If we are all empowered to use our gifts and talents, we can begin reaching for our divine identity and embrace the power that it affords us. We can eradicate the bondages of addiction, depression, suicide, abandonment, rejection, low self-esteem and generational curses that have long plagued individuals, families and our society at large.

So, we are called to renew our minds, to believe in and to follow God’s promises; to keep producing, even after the setbacks. So as Eve did, by moving forward toward the purpose set for her life, even though she detoured from it temporarily, we can do likewise. We must receive God’s chastening and self-correct the paths we are on and seek to live guided by His spirit dwelling within us.

Women, we should seek to become who we were meant to be by partnering with God and releasing the god-like qualities within us. After all indiscretions, hurts, pain and indignities endured, may we find our way back to the purpose that God has for us. May we awaken and feed the seed he has deposited in us and nurture it to fruition. There is a world for us to change.

### Suggested Reading

*“How I Got Over: Healing for the African American Soul”*  
By  
R. Neal Siler



## ***THANKSGIVING***

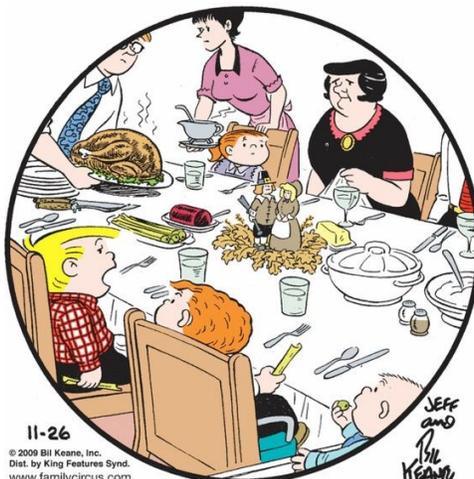
*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7 NIV*

As has been frequently taught, preached, and experienced, the Zion church family believes every day is Thanksgiving and no life is perfect or exempt from hurt! Therefore, we are eternally grateful for our healing, our breakthroughs, and our blessings, especially during the suffering and pain we've endured during the lingering pandemic virus. So many loved ones, friends and persons we know by association have suffered and/or transitioned from complications of the virus as well as from natural causes. Yet, we'll forever hold their memories in our heart, and eternally praise God for what He does for us and worship Him for who He is. Words can never express our full gratitude to our Sovereign God for what He did for us at the Cross or for the blessings He has poured into our lives. Surviving the virus and other woes of life has made our faith grow stronger and our hearts overflow with thankfulness for God's love toward us.

We, the Assembly of God, know that He is the Source of everything we have. Thus, we don't just thank Him for that which involve our tithes and offerings, but also that which encompasses every area of life we experience His blessings. Therefore, we must not just tell Him, "Thank You" but we must also show Him by using everything we have for His purpose. God gives us power to obtain wealth and materialistic things but we must be cautious not to allow these things own us to the extent we worship them or give them an immoral value in our living. It's not wrong for us to have material possessions, but it is wrong for our possessions to have us. Let us adopt a heavenly attitude toward earthly things. In other words, always have a godly value system and make sure your priorities are in order. When our time is over on earth, we certainly can't take our earthly treasures with us, but we can daily send our spiritual treasures ahead of us.

Because we have so much for which to be grateful, may we practice starting each day with a Prayer of Thanksgiving. Rather than emphasizing material success, thank God for the trials that cause you to recognize your spiritual needs, for the joys and sorrows that encouraged you to seek righteousness, and for whatever has helped you to develop the blessedness that reflects His plan for your well-being. Invest in that which is godly and daily thank the One who is our PORTECTOR, our HEALER, our COUNSELOR, our PROVIDER, our STRENGTH, our PROMISE-KEEPER our PEACE, and our ever-present HELP!

*To you, is **THANKSGIVING** just a day of **enjoyments** or a daily day of **gratitude**?*



11-26  
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**"I wish the Pilgrims had sent out for PIZZA on the first Thanksgiving 'stead of shootin' a turkey."**

# This and That Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving!

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| ___ A bundle of hay.                                     | A. Stuff             |
| ___ Pilgrims sailed to New World on this.                | B. Lions             |
| ___ Beverage carried on board Mayflower.                 | C. Pumpkin           |
| ___ Month Thanksgiving celebrated in Canada.             | D. Gimbels           |
| ___ It's good luck if you end up with large end of this. | E. Plymouth          |
| ___ First store to host Thanksgiving parade.             | F. Wad               |
| ___ Pilgrims were also referred to as _____.             | G. Sarah Hale        |
| ___ Favorite Thanksgiving pie.                           | H. Fourth            |
| ___ Favorite Thanksgiving day sport.                     | I. Mayflower         |
| ___ Wanted the turkey named as national bird.            | J. Puritans          |
| ___ Friends who were invited to first feast.             | K. Wishbone          |
| ___ Commonly done prior to cooking the turkey.           | L. Massaoit          |
| ___ Horn of plenty.                                      | M. October           |
| ___ Played against Bears in first football game.         | N. Football          |
| ___ Lobbied to make Thanksgiving a National Holiday.     | O. Cornucopia        |
| ___ Chief of Pilgrims' Native American friends.          | P. Beer              |
| ___ Mayflower anchored along this shore.                 | Q. Wampanoag Indians |
| ___ Which Thursday in November is Thanksgiving?          | R. Benjamin Franklin |



## The ADVENT Season

*Get ready for the World's Best News!*

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:6*

The Advent Season, the four weeks before Christmas, is a time of preparation that directs the hearts and minds of Christians to Christ's second coming and also the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas. As we relive the story each year, we gain new and deeper understanding of the meaning of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. We celebrate God's gift of Jesus Christ and give thanks.



The wreath is round, with no beginning or end, testifying to the eternity of God's creation, of His love and care for man. The candles, three purple, one pink, and one white, represent the One who said, *I am the light of the world*. One candle is lighted on the first Sunday in Advent, with an additional candle lighted each week. The white candle is lighted on Christmas Day. Often the candles are said to represent **hope, peace, joy** and **love**, because these words reflect the coming of the Christ to rule, judge, and to save.



The **first** Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of **HOPE**, a candle is lighted to remind us that He is our hope and the hope of the world. We thank God for the promises He has made to us and for the light He has brought into the world. *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* ROMANS 15:13

The **second** Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of **PEACE**. This candle is lighted to offer praises to God for the peace that the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace, will impart. *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ISAIAH 9:6



The **third** Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of **JOY**. Our joy is in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Like peace, joy is a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we remember what God has done and what He has promised to do. *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.* LUKE 2:10-11.

The **fourth** Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of **LOVE**. God is love. We thank God for the hope He gives, for the peace He bestows, for the joy He pours into our hearts, and for the love that redeems us and show us the way. *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* JOHN 3:16



# Christmas

## *A Time of Reflection and Hope*

The month of December is here, and Christmas is just around the corner. Excitement and joy fill the air, as people busy themselves in preparation and anticipation of a festive holiday season! Individually and collectively, we can hardly wait to share our enthusiasm in the loving company of our families and friends.

While sights and smells of Christmas, and time spent with loved ones assuredly evoke an aura of holiday delight, it is important that we, the believers, take time to reflect on the reverence of Christmas. We, as Christians, relish the opportunity to honor the birth of Jesus, the gift of God's own Son to whom we give thanks at Christmas time. The Bible tells us that Jesus was the long-awaited MESSIAH, God Himself. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to be available to meditate upon scriptures reflecting His teachings and truths about God and us.

As Christians, we well know that all things are possible with God. The Christmas holiday is a fitting time to proclaim that the Christian's hope is not in vain. Jesus shows how life can be full and wonderful if we live according to God's tenets. Though we currently struggle with societal ills including the ever-looming effects of COVID-19 and its Delta variant, the fallout of the January 6 insurrection and the egregious inequities amongst the human race, our hope in our Lord and Savior is steadfast. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is the ultimate reason to celebrate Christmas!

Altruistic displays of kindness during the holiday season are fragrant reminders of the enduring power that Christmas has in bringing out the uniqueness of the human spirit. Christmas is a moment to reset the clock, if only temporarily. It is an occasion to appreciate the fullness of life, and remember those here and gone, who contributed to its richness. There is a comfort and rhythm to the Christmas holiday that uniquely defines this time of year. It's another opportunity to show gratefulness and to lend a helping hand to those among us who are in need. It encourages us to be present for reconnecting with family, friends, and treasured traditions. The simple gift of time is invaluable.

Our best is evident in the heart of our giving, in the hope we profess, and in the goodwill, we extend to our neighbors. Christmas will be gone before we know it, and there's great joy today in remembering its true reason to celebrate and adding to its incomparable memories.

## *May You Have*

~~Ada V. Hendricks~~

*May you have the gladness of  
Christmas which is hope;  
The Spirit of Christmas which  
is peace;  
The heart of Christmas which  
is love.*

# Christmas Word Scramble

Please unscramble the words below



- |                   |       |                 |       |
|-------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. ualmmnIe       | _____ | 11. dapsrae     | _____ |
| 2. aelbGir        | _____ | 12. iayhlods    | _____ |
| 3. ioSvra         | _____ | 13. rast        | _____ |
| 4. tsimetoel      | _____ | 14. yraM        | _____ |
| 5. smtashiCr eTer | _____ | 15. oeJpsh      | _____ |
| 6. unsces         | _____ | 16. ehlhtBeme   | _____ |
| 7. etrwaha        | _____ | 17. tAndev      | _____ |
| 8. suJse          | _____ | 18. eAsngl      | _____ |
| 9. aemngr         | _____ | 19. lHoy iiptSr | _____ |
| 10. iwes enm      | _____ | 20. igaM        | _____ |

Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Scramble Maker



- |           |           |          |                |             |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|-------------|
| mistletoe | census    | Jesus    | Christmas Tree | star        |
| Joseph    | Advent    | wise men | Savior         | Holy Spirit |
| Immanuel  | Angels    | wreath   | holidays       | parades     |
| Magi      | Bethlehem | Mary     | manger         | Gabriel     |

# Christmas Word Search

G Q C E L V E S Z L I G H T S  
 D C Z L F J S R V N U L B Z B  
 C E L E B R A T E W M J E Y F  
 Q F D C W G N R E I N D E E R  
 P F Z E H J T G C O O K I E S  
 G R A N C R A I R I W B I H C  
 O M E M N O I U K S F V A Z A  
 R I I S I N R S N D O H J D N  
 N M M S E L E A T E C Q B W D  
 A G Z D T N Y C T M J C P R Y  
 M I I I U L T T W I A B T E C  
 E V H N Z W E S S Q O S B A A  
 N I E N A Q Q T F T P N J T N  
 T N G E P Q I C O P Y Z S H E  
 D G A R J W D E Q E Y P E B S

Decorations  
 Celebrate  
 Lights  
 Giving

Candy Canes  
 Ornament  
 Presents  
 Dinner

Christmas  
 Reindeer  
 Family  
 Wreath

Mistletoe  
 Cookies  
 Elves  
 Santa





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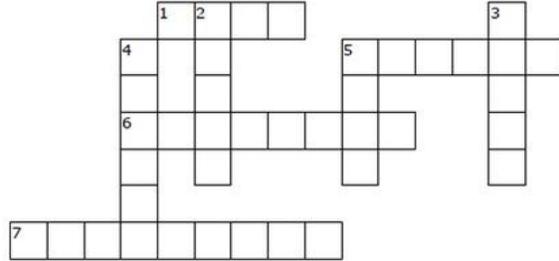
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## The Birth of Jesus

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 (KJV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 2:1-20



**ACROSS**

1. An infant or very young child
5. The place where Mary laid the baby Jesus
6. A person who takes care of sheep
7. The city where Jesus was born

**DOWN**

2. Heavenly being that told the shepherds about Jesus' birth
3. The savior of the world
4. The earthly father of Jesus
5. The mother of Jesus

JOSEPH	ANGEL	BETHLEHEM	BABY
MARY	SHEPHERD	JESUS	MANGER

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Connect the dots to make a gobbler!

### Word Cornucopia

Y	J	S	M	Y	L	E	J	S	E
I	R	B	E	D	V	W	K	I	S
J	C	R	L	P	S	A	P	K	Q
S	K	G	E	A	O	N	R	K	U
Y	C	Q	I	B	I	T	F	G	A
Q	E	L	R	K	N	W	A	R	S
Q	J	D	P	F	J	A	N	T	H
X	J	M	Q	R	A	V	R	H	O
S	U	T	U	R	K	E	Y	C	X
P	S	T	U	F	F	I	N	G	C

Cranberry    Squash    Pumpkin Pie  
 -Gravy-      Stuffing  
 Potato      Turkey

### Fun facts for Turkey Day

- The first Thanksgiving feast was held in mid-October of 1621, to celebrate the Pilgrims first successful fall harvest.
- Benjamin Franklin wanted the wild turkey named the national bird instead of the bald eagle.
- Thanksgiving wasn't official until Abraham Lincoln proclaimed it a national holiday in 1863.
- More than 45 million turkeys are cooked and eaten in the United States for Thanksgiving each year.
- In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday in October.



"Joy to the world, the Lord has gum ..."

12-22  
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BY  
AND  
JEFF  
KEANE