



December 2023

VOL. XXVI Issue 4



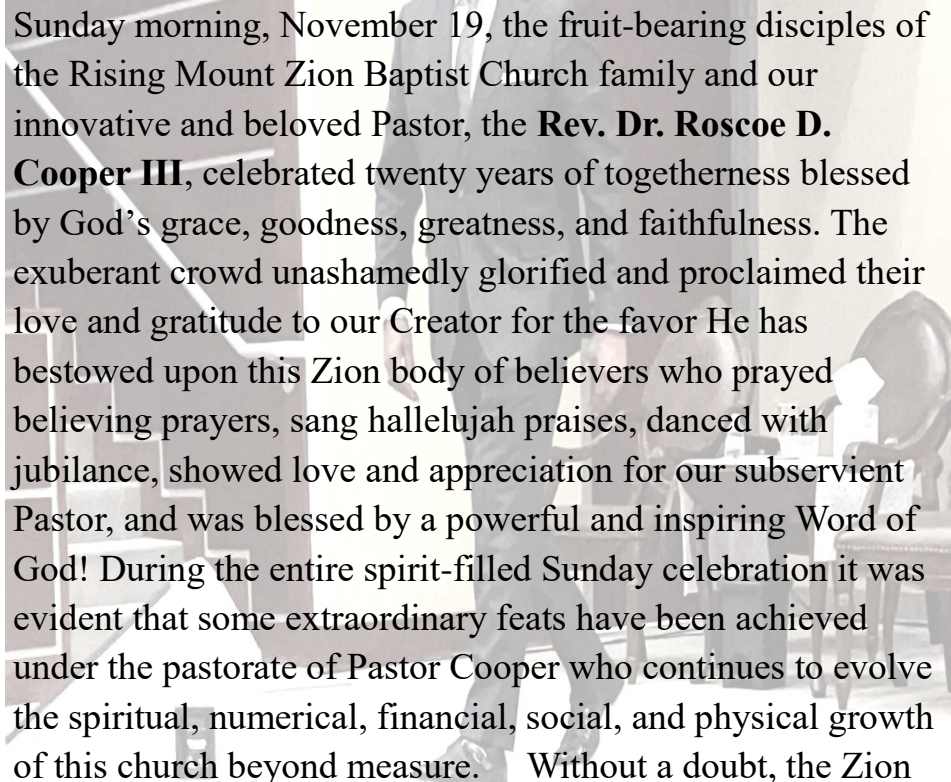
- **The RMZ Ministry Leadership Summit**
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## Walking in God's Grace for 20 Years

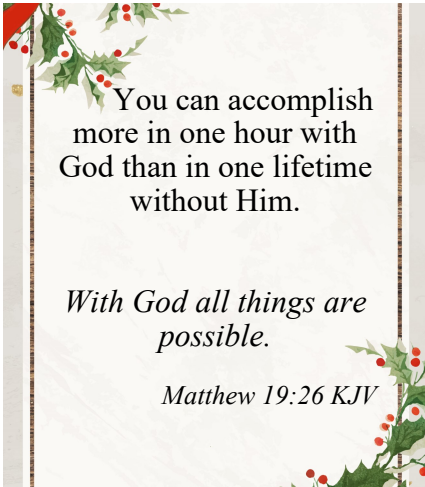
By Deacon Mary Kemp

*May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

2 Peter 1:2 CSB



Sunday morning, November 19, the fruit-bearing disciples of the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church family and our innovative and beloved Pastor, the **Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III**, celebrated twenty years of togetherness blessed by God's grace, goodness, greatness, and faithfulness. The exuberant crowd unashamedly glorified and proclaimed their love and gratitude to our Creator for the favor He has bestowed upon this Zion body of believers who prayed believing prayers, sang hallelujah praises, danced with jubilation, showed love and appreciation for our subservient Pastor, and was blessed by a powerful and inspiring Word of God! During the entire spirit-filled Sunday celebration it was evident that some extraordinary feats have been achieved under the pastorate of Pastor Cooper who continues to evolve the spiritual, numerical, financial, social, and physical growth of this church beyond measure. Without a doubt, the Zion



You can accomplish more in one hour with God than in one lifetime without Him.

*With God all things are possible.*

Matthew 19:26 KJV

Continued on Page 2

faith-walkers have ameliorated our availability to God, aligned ourselves with Him, learned to trust and depend on Him more readily, and confidently pray through all things, including life, anxiety, and adversity. Thus, we are eternally grateful to our Omniscient God for sending to us this revolutionary Shepherd who is spiritually anointed and academically prepared for the task at hand--- to boldly preach and skillfully teach the good news gospel, bring souls to Christ, and soundly lead the flock that God has given him. He is a prolific preacher/teacher, and a dynamic, purpose-driven, compassionate leader whom the Zion faith-believers are asking God to continue to bless him in a mighty way as He shines through and uses him to help change the people of the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church and its communities---one life at a time!

We believe that the Word of God and prayer calm, inspire, and bring peace and freedom to the spirit, and that our help comes from the LORD who gives us divine assistance! God knows what we need; thus He puts people around us to be His hands and feet to us. Such relationships are often created in the church environment where God brings people together who will bless, encourage, challenge, and refresh one another. Without fail, we constantly glorify, honor, and thank Him for every experience, knowing that no moment is void of heavenly revelation!

Honoring his birthright and generations of namesake pastors, Pastor Cooper III chose his father, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper, Jr., the Senior Pastor of the Metropolitan African American Baptist Church to be the keynote evangelist for this significant occasion. Having greeted in kindness the awaiting and excited audience, Dr. Cooper chose his scripture, Philippians 4:10-13, 19,20, and entitled his sermon, *“Profits That Accumulate to Your Account.”* Just as Paul encouraged and loved the people in the Church of Philippi, Dr. Cooper encouraged Pastor and People of Zion to continue to love God, one another; focus on what He has done, celebrate the future, build on the past, listen to God and do what He has called us to do. Through it all, remember that God has blessed Zion; relationships are not made because we do everything right; yet, the God we serve is merciful and faithful! God heard our cry. He brought Pastor Roscoe D. Cooper III to us. Now we must remain faithful to God and God will be faithful to us, and thank Him for bringing Pastor and People together and keeping us together! As anticipated, Dr. Cooper’s sermon was powerfully delivered practical, timeless, appropriate and awesome! The fullness of the glory of God was felt and valued throughout the celebration!

## **THE BEST IS YET TO COME!!!**



**Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper, III**  
**Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper, Jr.**



## *Greetings My Dear Zion Family,*

Continually striving to be spiritually fruitful in my total being and always thankful and giving homage to the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me, I greet you, my Zion family and friends, in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who daily orders my steps in His Will, His Way and His Word. Although this year seems almost like a flash, we, the Zion body of believers, have experienced God afresh in our lives in so many good as well as challenging ways this year. Regardless to our circumstances, we are grateful and glorify our Creator whose favor and grace have met our every need, calmed our spirits, emboldened us to hold on to our faith, given us peace, and piloted our relationship with the Almighty to new heights. Satan is steadily planning and plotting to attack the frailties, weaknesses, faults of distracted people who allow false teachings and fake news and beliefs to invade their spirit. Therefore, it is essential that as believers of Christ, we must focus on the plan, prayer and purpose of our Savior who delivers us and gives us strength through His power to be survivors, to put His infallible Word above all, and to have a present-tense spirituality and a believing and breakthrough faith that walk current with God, confident in God, and confirmed by God.

During this season of gratefulness, the essence of our belief must cultivate Christlikeness of His conduct and character that uproots the flesh and ripens the spiritual cluster which is the fruit of the Spirit of God. You see Zion and all believers, the Spirit of God produces His peace, joy, and love, faithful and fruitful Christians, a life of service, patience, kindness, and a spiritual climate control that guides us out of our sanctimonious darkness into His marvelous light. I believe that each of us can be more responsible to do the work being assigned to us by God—give your best, aim to please Him---not people, and keep working, praying and persevering! Since the supernatural cultivated the fruit of the Spirit, we must understand that spiritual gifts are not toys but rather they are things used to grow us. Therefore, every child of God ought to expect adversity in their life and know that our suffering, trials, heartbreaks, and temptations are the platform for God's glory that help us to understand His quiet voice, mold us into Jesus' character and equip us for the future.

Regardless to what comes our way, losing heart, becoming spiritless, quitting, or retreating is never an option. The turbulence of life is not a reason to give up but a cause to "Hold On" because our weakness is God's profundity of His strength and glory. Affliction is real, indicating that every day, the *outer self is wasting away* and *the inner self is being renewed*. Accordingly, believers should focus on the eternal invisible (unseen) realities instead of the transients or seen things, have a sense of Oneness with God, and not waste the time He has given us.



*Because of the gratefulness that God eternally perpetuates in my spirit, the chambers of my heart overflow with exultation of love, appreciation and thankfulness to each of you for your gifts of love as we celebrated together our Pastor and People 20<sup>th</sup> Appreciation Day! Although my words never seem adequate to express my sincere feelings, it is my prayer that God will continue to bless us with His grace and mercy as we intentionally walk with Him and one another for many idyllic years to come.*

***May the Christmas season bring great joy and the glorification of the greatest gift of all  
 ~~the Birth of JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR~~  
 JOY TO THE WORLD***

Be blessed,

*Ronnie D. Cooper III*







October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Since its start in October of 1985, Breast Cancer Awareness has sought to bring attention to the dangers of breast cancer occurrence in the United States and to educate the public about the disease. During the month of October, supporters and advocates wear pink ribbons to honor survivors, remembering those that lost the battle with the disease, and to encourage progress toward defeating breast cancer. October 13 is nationally recognized in the United States as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day to raise awareness and to push for more research. If not detected early, breast cancer can metastasize (i.e., spread to parts of the body away from the breast). Statistics states that 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer.

Other than *skin cancer*, **breast cancer** is the most common cancer among American women. *Mammograms* are the best way to find **breast cancer** early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. There are different symptoms of **breast cancer**, and some people have no symptoms at all. However, symptoms can include...

1. Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
2. Pain in any area of the breast.
3. Nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood).
4. A new lump in the breast or underarm.

If you have any signs that worry or concern you, see your doctors right away.

Although breast cancer is more common in women, breast cancer affects men as well. In 2021, President Biden designated October 17 through October 23 as Men's Breast Cancer Awareness Week. About 2,710 American men are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer, and about 530 are expected to die from the disease.

Furthermore, each year includes a special theme. This year's theme is Thrive 365 with campaigns and programs aimed at:

- Supporting people diagnosed with breast cancer.
  - Black women are most likely to die from breast cancer than woman of other ethnic groups.
- Educating people about breast cancer risk factors.
  - Risk factors include smoking, drinking alcohol, and not exercising regularly.
  - About 85% of breast cancer occur in women who do not have a family history of breast cancer. It may be due to genetic mutations that occur because of the aging process, rather than inherited mutations.
- Stressing the importance of regular screening starting at age 40 or an age appropriate for your personal breast cancer risk.
  - Screenings include regular self-breast exams, annual doctor exams, and yearly mammograms for women 40 years and older.

[Breast Cancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org)

*Researched & reported by Karen S Brown*



# The RMZ Ministry Leadership Summit

~by Deacon Mary Kemp~

The Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church held its first Ministry Leadership Summit since COVID on Saturday, September 30, in the Zion sanctuary. The summit began promptly at the scheduled time with Pastor Cooper presiding. He greeted everyone and called the gathering to order, asking Deacon Lorenzo Doswell to read the scriptural readings, *1 Thessalonians 5:11* and *Hebrew 6:10*, and Deacon Mary Kemp to offer the opening prayer. Realizing that the pandemic had changed, impacted and challenged our church and the world, Pastor Cooper immediately opened with the purpose of the meeting---to **re-imagine, re-engage, and re-birth** the Zion ministries. Being a forward-thinking leader, he knew that in order for the church ministries to resume and function on a level to serve and meet the needs of a transformed and diverse congregation, adjustments, new values and beliefs had to be adapted.

For emphasis, Pastor Cooper referenced the scripture reading, *Mark 2:22*, stressing the fact that just as new wine is not put in old wineskins nor can church ministries function in the traditional manner they did before the virus. Already the RMZ church worship services, prayer calls, and Bible study sessions are in-person and/or online, increasing the participation beyond measure. While considering a similar approach, it is essential that our church ministries be rearranged to serve and meet the needs of its people. As God's spiritual servants and ministers we must change our beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and behavior and begin to think bigger, believe bigger, expect bigger, be used by God and operate in the area of our gifts. A poignant example was cited using Jesus' Words, "You can't have new life with old things," indicating that "new" requires rebuilding, reconstructing, and rearranging. God wants **servant-leaders** (*John 13:14*) who have a Jesus-like spirit---see yourself as a foot-washer, shift your thinking, and serve with a joyful heart. Furthermore, He wants us to be **shepherds** over His people, not because we must, but rather because we desire and care to lead, feed, and meet the needs of others and lead by example.

Shifting the participation Pastor divided the large group into four smaller groups composed of approximately fifteen or more persons in each group. The following questions were assigned to each group.

1. Why do you feel called to do ministry?
2. What are the characteristics of a great leader?
3. What should the church look like?
4. How do we re-engage our congregation, including children and youth?

Each group chose or a person volunteered to be the writer and/or the presenter. Time was allotted for the group members to answer each question, followed with the presenter orally sharing the answers of his/her group in the open dialogues. As anticipated, some answers were echoed in each group and a plethora of ideas were birthed in the group discussions.

In conclusion, Pastor Cooper encouraged the participants to bind together with God and others, commit to God's Will, to be intentional in executing the purpose of the **Great Commandment** and the **Great Commission** which makes a great church. The five purposes of the church are **Worship, Ministering, Evangelism, Fellowship, and Discipleship**. Pastor Cooper emphatically pronounced that in the post-pandemic era, the church and its ministries must be approached in a diverse direction that serve and meet the needs of its people and realize that new times call for new things!!



**A Well-Planned, Purposeful, Timely, and Most Fruitful Summit!**



## SPOTLIGHT on.....

# Harriett LeGorde Johnson

*By Goldie LeGorde Johnson*



*Harriett LeGorde Johnson* is one of six siblings and the daughter of her beloved parents, Goldie LeGorde Johnson and the late Harvey Lee Johnson Sr. At twelve years of age, Harriett joined the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church where she remains a faithful member and continues to participate in and enjoy its religious teachings, studies, and activities. Harriett has been a church school teacher and is presently an active member of the Joseph Smith Memorial Ushers Ministry.

After graduating from Huguenot High School in Richmond VA, Harriett continued her education at Commonwealth College where she obtained an Associate Degree in Information Technology. She then enrolled in Bryant & Stratton College where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management.



Although holding several jobs within the business workforce, she began her career as a Clerical Assistant for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Pharmacy, a position she acquired through a Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) program offered at Huguenot High. At Crestar Bank, Harriett continued her business career initially as a Customer Service Representative and later, in the position of Recovery Coordinator.

She is currently in gainful employment with Dominion Energy and feels blessed to have been employed by this company for twenty-three years. Originally she was a Customer Service Representative, and after having advanced several levels within the ranks of Process Assistant, is now employed as a Metering Field Scheduling Analyst II.



Supporting communities in need through volunteerism is a selfless practice that is important to Harriett. As an employee of Dominion, she is given an eight-hour volunteer window each year in which she can support the company's community causes. She has used this window to assist with tasks related to Troop Support, Special Olympics, Waymakers Foundation (a nonprofit organization devoted to helping individuals in crisis), drives for back to school materials, and more. Harriett has also participated with various independent organizations in providing support to the homeless community.

From an early age, Harriett's appreciation for the performing art of dance was evident. When she was seven years old, she joined the Cary Clarke Dance Academy and remained with the academy until she was sixteen. She studied and performed various dance genres, including ballet, tap, and jazz. The academy performed every year at the Altria theatre, formerly known as the Mosque. Her current dance of choice is line dancing.

Harriett is grateful for having had a good life. Her faith, integrity, patience, and an ability to focus without taking everything at face value have been keys to her success in all that she has strived to achieve. "Open My Heart" is her favorite gospel song. Her favorite scripture is Philippians 4:13, ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."***

*The R.MZ Church Family is extending with love, hearty congratulations to **Harriett LeGorde Johnson** for being selected as the Rising Mount Zion VOICE Newsletter spotlight person for its December 2023 issue!*

# Being a Christian is like being a pumpkin!

God picks you from the patch and brings you in.  
(John 15:16)

Then washes all the dirt off of you.  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

He opens you up and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc.  
(Romans 6:6)

Then He carves you a new smiling face.  
(Psalm 71:23)

And He puts His light inside you to shine for all the world to see.  
(Matthew 5:16)



## THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



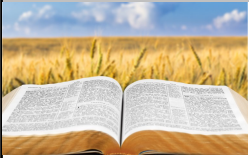
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BIL  
and  
JEFF  
KEANE

"I'M DONE TOO, MOMMY.  
MY TUMMY IS ALL OUT  
OF THANKS."





# Spratley Allen Missionary Circle

By Sister Valorie McBee

*He sent out His word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. Psalm 107:20*

God continuously blessed the Spratley Allen missionaries as they reached out to others in need during the 2023 year of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It was a true blessing to assist the Rising Mt. Zion Events Ministry with the Back to School Project by donating school supplies, while also assisting with the set-up and distribution of those supplies. The missionaries gladly donated clothes and toys to homeless families within the community, and contributed activity books, crayons, color pencils, markers, boxes of snacks and tissues to the Ronald McDonald House Charity Event. Gift cards, get well and sympathy cards along with phone calls and prayers were extended to the sick and the bereaved.

Throughout the year, members participated in the Baptist General Convention Women's Ministry monthly hour of prayer, week of prayer services during the month of October, informative workshops, Sister-to-Sister Roundtable discussions and BGC's retreats and conventions. The Week of Prayer was a two-fold event. The Area A Program was held on October 19 via zoom. Vice-Chair, Sister Viola Hicks, presided. Prayers with scriptures were offered under the following titles: *Prayer for Women Everywhere, Leadership, Youth and Children, Spirit, Wisdom, Courage, and Faith*. Rev. Dr. Margaret Edney, President of BGC Women's Ministry, and Deacon Renita Thornton, Chairperson of Area A, offered encouraging closing remarks. The Week of Prayer Culmination Service was held on October 24 via zoom, reinforcing the listed prayer titles. Baptist General Convention President, Rev. Milton Bunting and Executive Minister, Rev. Dr. Leo Whitaker offered heartfelt greetings. Rev. Dr. Edney facilitated and Rev. Diann Beard served as the Devotional Leader.

Rev. Dr. Elisha Burke, Project Director of "Sacred Spaces" – Preservation of African American Churches, Cemeteries, and Historic Structures, under BGC sponsored a forum on preserving the history of our churches. The Rev. Dr. Barbara A.F. Brehon, Associate Pastor of Beulah Baptist Church, Tappahannock VA, and the author of Beulah Remembrances: A Collection of Oral, Pictorial History, was the speaker, referencing to *Matt 1:11, Hebrew 1:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 12:12*. Rev. Dr. Brehon suggested several ways to preserve our history: 1. Interview elderly members and take pictures of the pictures they have (with permission). 2. Take notes of courthouse records in reference to the physical building and historical events. 3. Sunday school ledgers are also recorded history. 4. Go through personal belongings and be mindful to hold on to records that can become a part of your history. 5. Develop the gift of writing so that your history may be available for future generations.

Under the leadership of Sister Pauline Holmes, the Spratley Allen missionaries sponsored a Mental Health Awareness workshop on Saturday, October 28. Certified mental health professionals, Winnie Williams and Kendall Robinson from the Henrico Mental Health Department were the presenters. Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) was the key focal point. Our perception of the world and the memories of our childhood experiences impact who we are and who we become. Adverse childhood experiences affect our central nervous system and those biological adversities often collide with social expectations. Childhood trauma can start before birth as a fetus in the womb. Household dysfunction, neglect and abuse are also prevalent factors. Preventive systems and resiliency, attachments and belonging, community, culture, spirituality are ways to help with healing. What a blessed beginning for healing and deliverance!





## Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

*Romans 12:12 NIV*

**GOD HEARS.** Many of us have earnest, persistent prayers that seem to go unanswered. But we can be assured that God does care and He does hear all our requests. He urges us to continue to walk closely with Him, being ...*Romans 12:12*. Pastor Cooper and the Zion family love, support, embrace, and pray for you as you adjust to the physical separation of your loved one. Never give up on our Faithful God! Keep praying, lean on Him and reap His Omnipotence that gives us ultimate value, protection, and peace!

- **Sister Amber Hughes** mourns her maternal grandmother, *Sister Betty Jackson*.
- **Sister LaToya Downey-Delamar, Young Miss Daliyah Downey, and Little Miss Daylen Delamar** mourn her mother-in-law and their grandmother, *Sister Joan Delamar*.
- **Brother Rodney Roane** mourns his son, *Brother Solomon Andrew Roane* of Chesterfield VA.
- *Sister Lisa Crutchfield Street, Brother Raymond Street, Brother Henry A. Street, Jr., Brother Stewart D. Street, Sr.; and Sister Cassandra Street, Trustee Marion McMackle, Sister Carolyn Johnson, Sister Lisa Street, Sister Marchena Gaither* of Maryland, **Brother Bruce McMackle, Sister April Gaddy (Brother Malcolm)** mourn her son, his brother, their nephew, and their cousin, *Brother Kareen Jermaine Street*.
- **Sister Alice A. Davis** mourns her husband, *Brother Harold Edward Davis*.
- **Deaconess Helen T. Day and Brother Kenneth McCowan** mourn her father and his cousin, *Brother Robert McCowan, Sr.*
- **Sister Corliss Freda Morton-Johnson, Brother Carroll Morton, Jr., Sister Cherjuana Fazeta Morton, and Brother Chequan Jones, Sister Brittany Jones, Brother Christopher Jones, Brother Justin Jones, and Sister Jaylah Morton,** mourn her husband, their father, and their grandfather, respectively, **Brother Matthew Emanuel Johnson**.
- **Deacon Renita Thornton (Rev. William S. Jr.), Sister Renata Brown Watkins (Navell), Brother William S. Thornton III (Sister Jasmine), Brother Eric Thornton, Sr. (Sister Apollonia), Brother Everett Preston (Sister Vanea), and Sister Shirley B. Robinson** mourn her sister, their aunt, and her step-daughter, respectively, *Sister Rita Hubbard Russell*.
- **Brother Ronald Johnson (Sister Beverly) and Dr. Kendra Johnson** mourn his brother and her uncle, *Brother William Jefferson*.
- **Sister Edna Conway, and Sister Patricia Oliver, Sister Carolyn Lewis, Sister Deborah Conway, and Sister Ebony Oliver** mourn her sister and their aunt, *Sister Dorothy Dabney*.
- **Sister Sheila Green (Brother Irvin), Sister Lavette Branch, and Sister Tanise Ingram (Brother Sean), Brother Jermaine Branch (Sister Rosmund), Sister Chanel Branch, and Sister Chayla Robinson, Sister Laila Robinson,, Young Miss Aaliyah Ingram and Young Mister Andre Ingram,** mourn their brother and their uncle, *Retired CSM Lloyd Coley*.
- **Sister Rita Billings, Sister Karen Scott, Sister Khaniya Valentine, Sister Kamani Valentine, Brother Kwaleek Valentine, Brother Kyan Valentine, Brother Rashawn Valentine, Sister Sakeeta Valentine, and Sister Taisha Valentine** mourn her aunt, her mother, and their grandmother/great-grandmother, respectively, *Sister Elsie Valentine*.
- **Sister Jelaine Branch** mourns her mother, *Dr. M. LaVerne Branch*.
- **Sister Joyce Thompson, Sister Deborah Andrews, Sister Monica Barnette, and Sister Kamesha Barnette** mourn their uncle/great uncle, *Brother Joe Lambert, Sr.* of South Hill VA.
- **Sister Edith Reid, (Brother Warren L.)** mourns her father, *Brother Daniel Snead*.
- **Sister Ceressa (Cee) Randolph (Brother Norman), Sister Karen Allen and Young Adult Sister McKinley Richard** mourn her sister and their aunt/great aunt, *Sister Charles Rebecca Dixon (97)*.
- **Sister Kimberly Wall** mourns her dearly beloved friend, *Brother Andrews Roberts*.
- **Sister Rosita Mason and Sister Constance Mason** mourn their aunt, **Sister Karen Turner**.
- **Sister Marie Downey(Trustee Phil), Sister LaToya Delamar, and Brother Phio Downey** mourn her mother and their grandmother, *Sister Catherine Cheek (91)* of Charlotte NC.



## Being a CAREGIVER & Managing STRESS

*Researched & Experienced by Sister Valorie McBee*

*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Psalm 143:10*



A caregiver is someone who provides care on a regular basis for another person with an injury, an illness, (including dementia) or disability. The caregiver often has to manage the individual's daily life and assist with necessary activities such as bathing, eating, or taking medicine.

According to a survey, as reported by Women's Health.gov, most Americans may become caregivers at some point during their lives, particularly as the elderly population increases. Changes in the health care system are determining factors that require more home-based medical care. Most family caregivers are women who may also have outside paid jobs. Family caregiving may also include making important health and financial decisions for the aging, sick or disabled. However, caregiving can be rewarding because of the precious time that is spent with the loved one and that time can bring forth new and loving meaning to the relationship.

### Caregiver Stress

The term stress is derived from the Latin "strictus" and the Old French "entrace" (a force or pressure that causes distress and a response that may include adversity or affliction) (Keefe, 1988, *Stress Management – Psychological Foundations*). However, in today's world, stress is denoted as a set of changes that people undergo when in a situation that they appraise as threatening to their well-being. These changes involve physical, emotional, and even overt behaviors. The circumstances that induce stress responses are designated as stressors. Different factors determine how one interprets stressful events (cognitive appraisal), how one deals with them and how effective one is in managing them (coping strategies). *Stress Management - Psychological Foundations* by Auerbach & Gramling.

Although stress can be part of everyday life, family caregiver stress is compounded mostly due to the emotional and physical strain of caregiving, particularly when the responsibility falls upon one family member without any help from other members of the family. Caregiving can be overwhelming if there is little or no assistance.

### Self-Care

When self-care is approached from a self-awareness perspective, it is of utmost importance, particularly during the caregiving journey. When people becomes aware of their spiritual, emotional, physical, psychological or mental and even financial and environmental states of being, it could lead one to engage in a holistic wellness plan and possibly practice stress management techniques that could be beneficial such as....

- ◆ Being spiritually aware is to seek God's presence in one's daily life, through prayer, scripture, and meditation, and to be willing to lean and trust on God.
- ◆ Maintaining a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy meals, exercising, getting proper rest, and getting medical check-ups for physical well-being.
- ◆ Being aware of the emotional state of how one is feeling is important, feelings such as sadness or depression, dispirited or downhearted. Pray and ask for guidance in working through your feelings, keep a journal, be kind to yourself, take a break, use respite care or a trusted friend or family member, seek positivity and distance yourself from negativity.





- ◆ Becoming aware of one's thought processes is important in mental health awareness. Retrain the brain to think positive thoughts with daily affirmations, gain knowledge and wisdom through scripture, seek mental health professionals.
- ◆ Asking for and accepting help, even financial assistance can be beneficial to everyone.
- ◆ Be grateful to God for Divine guidance during your journey. Be willing to be used by God after your caregiving experience.
- ◆ Share your story, offer support to other caregivers.



#### Caregiving services may include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Meal delivery
- ◆ Home health care services, such as nursing or physical therapy
- ◆ Making changes to your home, such as installing ramps or modified bathtubs
- ◆ Legal and financial counseling



**Caregiver Resources/Source** –National Family Caregivers Association, VCU Center on Aging & Gerontology, AARP Adult Children of Aging Parents, Alzheimer's Association;  
[www.Wellness.uchicago.edu](http://www.Wellness.uchicago.edu)

***Being a caregiver is a very praiseworthy task that requires patience, love, honesty, and self-discipline to care for another who is unable to take care of their personal and daily activities.***

**NOTE:** Consult with your medical professional to diagnose or treat any ailments or abnormalities you may be experiencing as these coping strategies are only suggestions to help with managing stress.

Dear God,  
 We thank you for all your blessings,  
 For life's trials, tribulations, and lessons.  
 Dear Caregiver,  
 Whatever your plight, whatever the test,  
 Do whatever you can; just do your best.  
 And God will surely do the rest.  
 Stay encouraged, inspired and uplifted.  
 Hearts are inspired by God,  
 Therefore, we are gifted  
 To love, assist, and encourage one another  
 Most certainly so, dear sister and brother.  
 So pray, pray, pray  
 For guidance and strength through the day.  
 God will direct your path,  
 And help you find your way.

*Poem composed by Valorie McBee as published in her book entitled,  
Poems and Prayers of Inspiration 4 You copyright 2022.*



## THANKFUL For What We, the People, Have

~by Deacon Mary Kemp~

*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.  
1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Gratitude is to show that a kindness received is valued and appreciated. Giving thanks is a choice that a person makes every day. For some, being grateful means simply living with a sense of gratefulness, taking time to recognize and focus on the things we have, instead of what we wish we had. For others, thankfulness can be the gift of contentment of having “enough.” The old-time concept of “enough” was: Enough was a roof that didn’t leak. Plenty of chairs at the table...Enough food not to be hungry whether one had a full table or a frozen dinner, protection and safety from the elements..., enough was a little help for a friend in need and debt to no one. Nowadays, more than enough can be baseless, indicating that when we have more, we never have enough because seemingly, the more we acquire the more indefinable *enough* becomes. Those who have more, usually become less of a worshiper.

The Bible takes the idea of “thankfulness” to a deeper greatness---the act of giving thanks causes Christians to recognize the One who provides our blessings. Thus, today we can be truly thankful by worshipping the Giver instead of the gifts we enjoy. Focusing on the good things in our lives may benefit our bodies but directing our thanks to God benefits our souls, stressing that “true” thanksgiving emphasizes the Giver rather than the acquired material things.

Our God has richly blessed us; and gratitude and praise are the relevant responses to His goodness! As a body of Christ believers, we know that our lives may not be perfect from our perspective, but we must look at the plentiful blessings we have from our Creator and know that He is the Source of everything we have. Therefore, it is required of us to practice proper stewardship that goes beyond our tithes and offerings, and encompasses every area of our lives in which we’ve experienced God’s blessings. Developing our relationship with our Heavenly Father is to worship, praise and honor Him on an everyday basis by telling Him “Thank You” for all He has done, is doing, and shall do, and living our life to glorify His purposes.

Therefore, may the God of our abundance daily bless us with the gift of being content in whatever state we are, grateful to Him for forgiving us of our sins, giving us His provision for our flourishing harvest on the earth, and the mindset to realize that we are rich if we are satisfied with what we have! Thank you, Almighty God for giving us Your Son and “enough” of everything we need. Heavenly Father, give us ...

Enough **HAPPINESS** to keep us **CONTENT**  
 Enough **TRIALS** to keep us **STRONG**  
 Enough **SORROW** to keep us **HUMAN**  
 Enough **HOPE** to keep us **HAPPY**  
 Enough **FAILURE** to keep us **HUMBLE**  
 Enough **SUCCESS** to keep us **EAGER**  
 Enough **WEALTH** to meet our **NEED**  
 Enough **ENTHUSIASM** to **LOOK FORWARD**  
 Enough **FRIENDS** to give us **COMFORT**  
 Enough **FAITH** to banish **DEPRESSION**  
*Thankful*

Enough **DETERMINATION** to make **EACH DAY BETTER THAN YESTERDAY!**

*When God says “Be content,” He whispers to those of us with willing hearts,  
 “I am enough. Find your satisfaction in ME and be grateful!”*

# Thankful GRATEFUL Blessed

## *What I am Thankful For*

*By Belinda Johnson*

I am grateful for having parents who made sure that my siblings and I went to church at a young age, which was, no doubt, the foundation of my faith in God. In spite of my flaws, I am blessed that God kept me and continues to keep me and my family. I am so humbly thankful that He blessed me with two beautiful, intelligent, hard-working daughters and two wonderful grandchildren who love the Lord. Every day God uses me in a way that I feel honored that He allows me to speak a positive word to people that I meet daily. It is my prayer that whatever I do on this side, God will always get the Glory out of it.

## **I Am Thankful**

*By Jaleah Lewis – 11<sup>th</sup> grader*

I am thankful for life itself. I think sometimes we get caught up in daily living and forget the basics---LIFE! I am thankful that I am able to feel, and think freely. Eating my favorite food, watching my favorite shows, and spending time with those I enjoy are all things that life has given me. I cannot imagine not being able to feel happy, sad or sometimes angry. While some of these feelings can bring about factors that may cause stress or are unwanted. To me, that's what makes life so special. I am thankful for the chance to feel and be alive; just knowing that I get to experience something that could not be found anywhere else.

## **I Am Thankful**

*By Jonathan Carey, new father*

What I am most thankful for is an easy choice and that's my son, Asher. It's a bit scary being a first time parent but was even more so during the height of the pandemic. Every day was nerve-racking, but spending so much time close together made our relationship even more special. He has been the greatest gift and everything I could have hoped for and more. His birth has helped me see life from a different perspective. Therefore, my lasting goal is to be the best dad possible and make sure I cherish this gift daily.





# Health Matters

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD



## Be in Control of Your Mental Health

The term **mental health** is heard often as the incidence of mental health illness has increased since the pandemic. Mental health is defined as the psychological and emotional well-being of a person. It refers to how we think and how we feel and act. Good mental health indicates feeling in control of day-to-day stressors, managing life and being effective in problem solving and being productive at work and home as well as other activities.

**Mental health illness** refers to a wide range of conditions that affect one's mood, thinking and behavior. These conditions include mostly commonly depression, anxiety disorders and bipolar disorders. Other common conditions include substance use disorder, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), schizophrenia and eating disorders. Anxiety disorders which include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder is the most common mental illness diagnosed in America followed by depression. Approximately 1 in 4 persons over the age of 18 will suffer from a mental illness in a given year with a higher incidence in women over men. Statistics however suggest that about 25% of African Americans seek mental health treatment compared to 40% of White Americans. Research shows that many Black Americans view mental health conditions as a consequence of personal weakness and therefore do not seek treatment because of feelings of shame and worry of perception from family and friends.

**Anxiety disorders** in general are characterized by *symptoms of excessive worrying, fatigue, tense muscles, fear, irritability and feeling agitated.* **Symptoms of depression** include *a feeling of sadness, feeling of guilt, low self-esteem, difficulty with sleep, changes with eating patterns, and lack of concentration and loss of interest.*

In a study from Boston College in 2021 it was revealed that anxiety disorders had increased 50% and depression increased by 44% which is 6 times higher than what was reported in 2019 before the pandemic. The implications from the rise in mental health illness since the onset of the pandemic leads to many experts believing the US is facing a **mental health crisis**. This increase is thought to be related to the social isolation and loneliness that resulted from the pandemic as well as the rise in use of social media leading to less in-person social involvement and interaction. Also contributing to the increase in the mental health crisis is an increased in revealing childhood abuse, racism and social disadvantage leading to poverty and debt. Suicide rates have risen nearly 30% since 2000 and are the second leading cause of death among persons age 15 to 24. The rise in mental health illness has soared especially among teenagers due to the fears and impact of having stopped school due to the pandemic. Access to care due to shortage of providers to care for those persons who may suffer from a mental illness has also compounded the crisis.

Protecting your mental health is essential for your overall health. The best way to help protect your mental health when experiencing increased stress or a life event situation includes good self-care. This means taking the time to do the things that help you to live well and improve both your physical health and mental health, such as:

- 1) **Learn to manage your stress.** *Identify coping techniques that help you work through the situation or problem.*
- 2) **Set goals and make a list of priorities.**
- 3) **Try a relaxing activity** *such as meditation or listening to music or reading.*
- 4) **Practice gratitude** *no matter what the circumstances may be. Make a list or keep a diary of things that you are grateful for*
- 5) **Focus on being positive.** *Keep away negative and unhelpful thoughts.*
- 6) **Make sleep a priority.**
- 7) **Get regular exercise.**
- 8) **Eat healthy meals and drink plenty of water** *to stay hydrated.*
- 9) **Stay connected to family and friends** *to help provide emotional support and practical help in your situation.*
- 10) **Seek professional help** *if you have any of the above listed symptoms from experiencing a severe or distressing situation or problem that you cannot work through.*

*If you or someone you know is suffering from a mental health crisis or having thoughts of suicide and needs urgent care, CALL 988 to talk to a professional on a crisis support team.*

# 5 DIGIT

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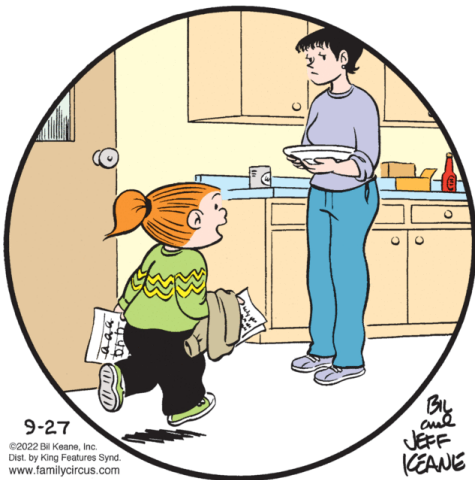
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## DIGIT LIST

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| 12345 | 34567 | 56454 | 78956 | 91322 |
| 13904 | 36524 | 58991 | 80675 | 95677 |
| 15112 | 42613 | 67807 | 83216 | 97882 |



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By and for JEFF KEANE

“The school nurse looked through everybody’s hair to make sure we don’t have any headlights.”

	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	Psalms	Matthew
Paul	66	Paul	3 John
None	False	True	Moses

**Bible Trivia Answers (not in order)**

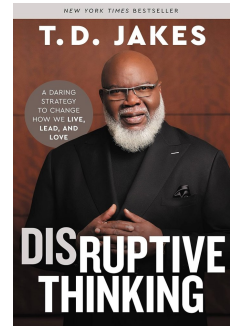
# Disruptive Thinking

A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead, and Love

By Bishop T. D. Jakes

With Nick Chiles

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



This book is for those of us who are willing to change our lives, rather than to live with the regrets of what if, what might have been. It is for us who are willing to work to change our community, our churches, our world, our own behavior. The reason for this book is that our society is on the brink of calamity and collision of biblical proportions and Bishop Jakes reminds us that there are no super heroes to save us from the disasters, given the absence of world-changing leaders today. The onus is on us to bring about the necessary changes in our lives. We must muster the courage to fight, flee or freeze and have the discernment to determine which is appropriate in the moment. To allow disruptive thinking, we must not be afraid of disruption. We must not be afraid to stand out, to be non-conforming; not prone to try to negotiate peace settlements with people who are trying to define us by their impression of who we are or who we should be. We can level set what we can achieve when we are willing to be disruptive in order to become more effective in bringing about necessary changes.

America is becoming what desolation looks like. The idea of the American dream has become more unreachable for some with each generation over the past half century. Wealth inequality has widened in our country, particularly as it relates to race. It is increasingly more difficult to work at a job long term and to build financial security for future endeavors as employers are offering less benefits and less loyalty to retain employees until retirement age. Fewer households of color can offer generational wealth to offspring, therefore, black families are working hard, only to find they are not getting ahead. More communities are feeling the winds of despair than ever before due to job prospects having disappeared. Trust in the American system has been replaced with anger and frustration. For these reasons, it is imperative that we must think of ways to mitigate the misery that many are facing and determining what can be done to bring about positive change. We must all step up and contribute to becoming change agents to create housing, employment, and educational opportunities and to turn the opportunities into reformative change.

Disruption is needed to free us all from domestic (which can occur within our own homes) and foreign terrorism. Because we are all infected with different types of trauma, we all need disruption; to be freed from the trauma. It can begin by changing the atmosphere in the home. It can begin by feeding our souls through meditation, by embracing nature, being peaceful, having appreciation for God's creations and purposely inviting people into our lives that feed us. Disruptive thinking is personal for each of us, as our needs are unique to us.

In order to bring about the transformation we need, we must be disruptive thinkers as well as disruptive doers. Partnerships of ministries and the marketplace may sometimes be necessary to bring the visions sought to fruition. It may require a concerted, collaborative effort to bring change for a more equitable society for the generations to come. Only then, will we be able to truthfully declare that ALL LIVES MATTER.

Society may not celebrate the disrupters and there will be controversy and opposition from detractors. Our history is abundant with examples of those who achieved a measure of success while "getting into good trouble" like Congressman John Lewis. There are many, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., who paid the ultimate sacrifice for being catalysts of change. As George Floyd's daughter, Gianna said, "Daddy changed the world." We must summon the courage to cross the "invisible fences" that we all have in our lives that keep us bound and curtail our attempts at boldness. These fences (and fears) keep us from being disruptive and leave us susceptible to manipulation and mistreatment. When we become comfortable with disruption and have settled on the other side of the fence, we realize there is much more work to be done. We find more and more fences to jump, because life is ever-changing. When we jump over the fence, we become small again, as the world and the troubles faced outside the fence are vast. Our comfort and stagnation will have been upended. It is then that we realize there are mountains to climb. There are new things to learn and conquer. Some of us may be fearful to continue to jump fences and climb mountains. We may choose to stay where we are. The Bishop has learned that the prize for winning the fight or overcoming the hurdle is the right to enter the next fight. So it is with our lives. We must learn to flourish in disruption, amid the fight. We are the people, the leaders, and the superheroes we have been waiting for.

## Suggested Reading

"15 Ways to Live Longer and Healthier"

By  
Joel Osteen







## Why Veterans Day Matters

*A Comprehensive Media Resource  
Researched via Google and Microsoft Bing*



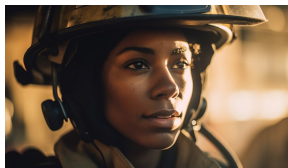
Veterans Day is a federal holiday in the United States that honors all military veterans who served in the armed forces. It is a much cherished American holiday, for which we thank the military servicemen and servicewomen who have given so much to our country. Originally it was called “Armistice Day,” a day set aside to honor the veterans of World War I. In 1921, Congress approved the burial of an unknown soldier from World War I at Arlington National Cemetery. This became a national symbol of gratitude and respect for all who served in the military. Other countries also adopted similar ceremonies and traditions. In 1954, after World War II and the Korean War, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill that changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day, to honor veterans of all wars, not just World War I. Congress moved Veterans Day to October in 1968, but many opposed it for losing the historical meaning of November 11. Former President Gerald R. Ford restored Veterans Day to November 11 in 1975. He valued the day's historical and patriotic significance and the public's wish to honor veterans. Today, Veterans Day is a time to celebrate the service and sacrifice of millions of men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States. It is also a time to educate the public about the veterans' contributions and challenges, and to support them in their communities.



**M**ay God bless the members of our church family who are Veterans of the United States Armed Forces as we offer our heartfelt appreciation for your service to our country. Your dedication and commitment to the freedoms of our democracy are an inspiration.

*Let us all aspire to those ideals as a way to honor their service and sacrifice.*

Thank you Veterans!



## The Advent Season

The **Advent Season**, the four weeks before Christmas, is a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ and a preparatory period of repentance, meditation, prayer, and penance. An **Advent wreath** adorned with five candles is traditionally used to symbolize different spiritual aspects of getting ready. The Advent wreath is round, with no beginning or end, testifying to the eternity of God's creation, of His love and care for man.

The three main Advent colors are full of meaning and come in three main shades. 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.

**PURPLE or VIOLET** is the color of royalty and the **Sovereignty of Christ**, who is known as the "King of Kings."

- The **1<sup>st</sup>** Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of **HOPE**. The candle is purple and lighted to remind us that He is our hope and the hope of the world. *ROMANS 15:13*
- The **2<sup>nd</sup>** Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of **PEACE** and the candle is also purple. It is lighted to offer praises to God for the peace that the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace, will impart. *ISALAH 9:6*
- Likewise, the **4<sup>th</sup>** Advent candle is purple, the angel candle, or the candle of **LOVE**. God is love. *JOHN 3:16*



**PINK or ROSE** is one of the colors of Advent used during the **third** Sunday of Advent.

- The **3<sup>rd</sup>** Advent candle color on the wreath is pink. It is named the shepherd candle or the candle of **JOY**, also a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we remember what God has done and what He has promised to do. *LUKE 2:10-11*

**WHITE** is the Advent candle color representing purity, light, regeneration, and godliness. White is also a symbol of victory.

- The white candle is the last or the **5<sup>th</sup>** Advent candle, positioned in the center of the wreath, and lighted on Christmas Day. Focusing on Advent, its colors and meaning, in the weeks leading up to Christmas is a wonderful way for **Christian families to keep Christ the center of Christmas**, and for **parents to teach their children the true meaning of CHRISTMAS**.



This year while it is challenging amid the secular holiday celebrations---shopping, lights, decorations, and joyful carols, Advent is intended to be the season of insightful preparation in an anticipation of Christ's birth on Christmas Day. Reflection on the violence and evil in the world causes us to cry out to God to make things right. Our own sinfulness and need for grace lead us to pray for the Holy Spirit to renew His work in conforming us into the image of Christ.

*Therefore, we, the believers, 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 shows us the way!*

## Christmas and “The Perfect Gift”

*“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. 1 John 4:9, 16 NIV*

By Deborah S. Andrews

Every year, around the world, Christmas is a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ traditionally observed on December 25, known as Christmas Day and as a religious and cultural celebration. However, the Christian holiday has evolved into a religious and secular celebration, a day and season filled with celebrations of traditions. So this Christmas, as you savor a **candy cane**, say “danke schön” to the Germans for that confectionary treat was first created in Cologne. As you admire a **poinsettia**, say “gracias” to Mexico where the plant originated. Of course say, “merci beaucoup” to the French for the term, **Noël**, and give “cheers” to the English for the **mistletoe**.

Nevertheless, as we, a body of believers, celebrate various traditions and festivities of the Christmas season, our most sincere and heartfelt “thank you” is preserved for our good, merciful, and loving God who gave mankind the most unselfish and perfect Gift---His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. The true meaning for us to celebrate Christmas is embedded in the commemoration and celebration of our Savior who came to us in the most fragile package—a BABY, born in a manger, a most unsanitary condition.



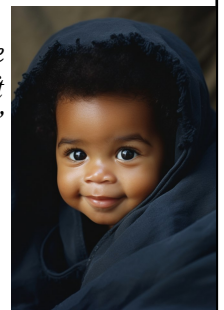
Christmas is a time of spiritual reflection on the important beliefs of your Christian faith. Jesus was born to “save us, His people, from our sins” (*Matthew 1:21*). His birth exceeds tradition: it is the central focus of Christians as we send praises to God for His indescribable Christmas gift. Thus, we give great gratitude to our Savior for willingly giving up His majesty and coming to earth in order to offer peace, hope and salvation to all mankind who would make Him Lord. He is the gift of intercession before God still working on our behalf, loving and giving. Christians celebrate the gift of the Savior through worship, prayer and thankfulness for the love, hope and joy found in Jesus, our Redeemer and sacred Friend.

All God’s gifts are good! “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (*James 1:17*). Gifts from the Father come with a purpose with special care in order to bless us which are cause for us to excel in the grace of giving. No doubt, grace fulfills our joy of giving as we understand that all we have is from God, and He has shown us “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (*Acts 20:35*). As our hearts are focused on Him, our hands and hearts are open in love to give, serve, and forgive others.



Christmas is the season for giving gifts. And it’s no wonder that we give gifts to loved ones at this time, since Christmas is the celebration of God’s Gift to those He loves, His perfect Gift of Jesus to us. This Christmas, as you give and exchange gifts, do it in remembrance and honor of God’s gift to the world, the best gift ever given, His Son. Through His unbounded generosity He gave us, **Jesus, the perfect GIFT!**

*Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see people of all nations as recipients of Your grace and joy. “Therefore let us thank Him this Christmas for the Gift of His Son, accept His Gift with joyful spirits, and welcome Him into our hearts, homes and travels with thankfulness.” Amen!*





# Activity Page

## Bible Trivia Questions



### The Staff

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Daphne Hill

The bible is the most popular book ever written. (by copies sold) True or False \_\_\_\_\_

What four books tell about Jesus life on Earth? \_\_\_\_\_

Which book did Jesus directly write \_\_\_\_\_

How many books are in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

Which New Testament book has Jesus Sermon on the Mount? \_\_\_\_\_

The Bible was first written in the English language? True or False

What is the longest book in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the shortest book of the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

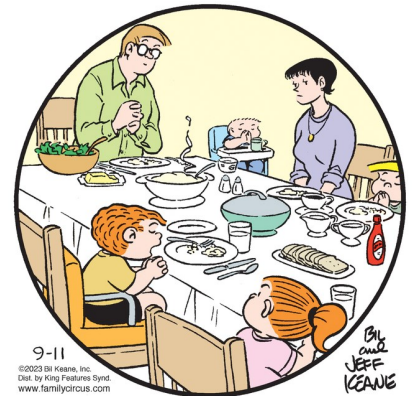
Which human author wrote the most books? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human author wrote the most words in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

## TO US A CHILD IS BORN

The words listed to the right can be found in a straight line, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and may be read forward or backward.

Z T Z V T R T F Z T Q I W R V  
M F O R E V E R E C A E P B P  
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O M Y E N W I T I B K C T Z R  
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A K H I I V A R W Z R U Y X T



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Bill and Jeff Keane

"... and bless the hands that repaired this food."

### WORD LIST

CHILD BORN	GREAT LIGHT
KINGDOM	DARKNESS
IMMANUEL	ISAIAH
PEACE	FOREVER
JOY	REIGN
GOVERNMENT	JUSTICE
RIGHTEOUS	MIGHTY GOD
ESTABLISH	