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# 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*

**T**he 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.



If you wish success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counselor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian genius.

*Knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance proven character; and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

*Romans 5:3-5 NASB*

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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 shows 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

*JESUS is the real reason for celebrating the  
CHRISTMAS Season!*



Dear Zion Family!

Prompted by love, blessed by peace, and inspired by hope in my God, it is my joy to greet you, my Zion family and friends in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the one who orders my steps in His Will, His Way and His Word. Twelve months ago our wildest dream didn't reveal to us what was to come---a year full of unexpected illness, extended virtual learning, cancellation of summer and fall activities, and way too many deaths, heartaches and stressful moments, to name a few. The attitude that has sustained us during this unusual year is that we know that the Holy Spirit who heard the groans and cries of our forefathers; still hears, remembers, sees, knows, shows up, and delivers us to something greater! Be patient, Zion, and know that God is paying attention to our expressions of suffering. Meanwhile, I pray for us to receive God's grace, to be obedient to His Word and to those whom God has given divine wisdom and virtue, not so we can close ourselves off from the world, but that we won't add to the unsettling noises of the world. As the body of Christ, we must recognize His presence, His touch and His voice in the midst of our pain, and submit to His Sovereignty. In times like these if every American entwines ourselves together, we form a larger, more solid core so that we can bravely stand upright and united in every situation that confronts us. When our lives are woven together with the presence of God at the center, there's a greater sense of stability, closeness, strength and humility. Don't ever allow your relationship with God to whither or your spirit to become discouraged. For we know that life can be challenging and it's during these times that the devil seizes to take advantage and defeat us. It is God who gives us traits of resilience, will power, faith, trust, words of confidence and encouragement, and the security of a life-vest that keep us afloat and looking up and the ability to rise no matter the number of times we get knocked down! Yes Zion, the circumstances and predicaments that we've had to endure this year have tested our patience, penitence, possibilities present and past! Yet, we are grateful to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that gives us competence to always have HOPE, the only strategy that will help us weather life's storms and the harsh times we experience. You see, Zion, we must watch in hope and wait patiently for the Lord, pray and remember His promise to be an anchor for our hearts when circumstances seem disheartening. His presence and His love give us the strength to overcome the corrupt things that happen to and around us and remind us that we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus! Let us admit that some truths are bitter and hard to swallow; while others are sweet and soothing to digest! If we remember how much God loves us, recognize His Words that provide wisdom to forgive others and strength to overwhelm our fears, I'm confident that all will work out for our good!

So, as we forge onward by the help and grace of God, we, as Pastor and People, shall persevere when some among us have given up in despair. It is our strong innermost being that gives us confidence and determination to nurture our God-created relationship so that it continues to grow for many harmonious and prosperous years to come. For the past seventeen years, God has shown us perpetual favor as we have sought to exhibit our greatest sense of duty to Him, who gives us life and new mercies each day! As a body of believers, we believe that when our spirits are in harmony with the Holy Spirit of God, our lives are filled with a holy strength that enables us to face life with courage and confidence, knowing that if Christ dwells within us, no fear can paralyze us! *Although words can't adequately describe my true feelings and are often forgotten, your thoughtfulness, love and appreciation expressed to me on October 18 certainly reflect my sincere sentiments toward each of you! Thank you from the utmost chambers of my heart and the depths of my soul!* I have a feeling that the year 2021 will be better for us because we are destined to walk in God's marvelous light!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HOPE FOR A KINDER AND BLESSED NEW YEAR!!!

Be Blessed...

*Pastor Cye*



## the BLESSINGS...

Year round the Rising Mount Zion church family chooses the attitude of gratitude to God! As a body of believers, we are truly blessed and grateful for every day God gifts us with life; for His touch we feel in our lives, and the unforgettable moments of joy and sadness we experience, letting us know without a doubt we are alive and exalted in His loving presence. A sincere and vibrant relationship with the living Christ speaks value to the meaning of a purposeful, spiritual life. Thus, we give thanks on Thanksgiving Day and every day because God richly blesses us, gives us inner peace and calmness as the uncertainty of the world creates a sense of anxiety! In spite of the challenging year we just experienced, our souls cry out, "Hallelujah" and our hearts rejoice and offer great gratitude to God for keeping us safe and granting us grace and mercy that always bring solace to an aching heart and the energy to keep going! Being confronted with the pandemic virus and skepticism of its outcome, we place our confidence and faith in God, trusting He will keep His Word and protect us in all situations. At times, no doubt our spiritual energy during the year was at its lowest especially when we witnessed the injustices so prevalent before our eyes, the suffering of loved ones, and their isolated deaths that haunt families for not being allowed to be by their loved one's side to show love and supportive comfort during their most vulnerable moment. In times like these, the maturation of our faith develops spiritual disciplines of meditation, prayer, Bible study, and true worship and is strengthened and matured through the tribulations we face. Yet, we believe that only the comforting peace of God's presence encompasses every pain, burden, grief and hurt we endure and that all will work out for our good. Deep within, we understand that as long as there's hope, nothing can get us down or make us buckle under pressure. And oh what joy comes in knowing that God is the Divine Source of everything we have and He has a loving purpose for our suffering that does not just come on Thanksgiving Day nor does it last forever! Therefore, it is obligatory on us to practice good stewardship to daily give back to God out of thanksgiving for what He has given us in every area of life. What a blessing to know that our trials cannot separate us from His love, His care, and His peace but rather bring us closer to Him! So, we embrace God's presence and thank Him for His help that have kept us thus far and will certainly shine His light on all our dark days.

To be able to thank God every day is a minimal act of indebtedness to Him, understanding we cannot comprehend the volume of gifts He has given us—His indescribable gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, the amazing gift of His death, the forgiveness of sin, His comfort, His Agape Love, His loving presence, His unseen friendship, His provision and grace, and the assurance of an eternal inheritance... In life there will always be those things that we can complain about, but there will also be much for which to be thankful. As our society becomes increasingly secular, unfortunately, the actual "giving thanks to God" during our annual Thanksgiving holiday is being overlooked, leaving only the feasting and shopping. Prayerfully, we will express our gratefulness to God every day for all of His gifts, spiritual and material. As a matter of fact, try counting your blessings one by one...1, 5, 10, 100, 250, 375, etc. STOP and add to them every day! So, **Thanksgiving Day** and **every day**, glorify and magnify the Lord with love, thank Him for His faithfulness and your countless blessings, and offer to Him your highest praise, HALLELUJAH! Blessed and so very thankful for His BLESSINGS!!!

*LORD, teach us the liberating joy of being thankful! Help us to find the blessings that are locked up in the things we complain about and to regularly express our gratitude to You by daily walking in Your way. Amen!!!*



# Thanksgiving

## (M A D L I B S) FOR KIDS

### THANKSGIVING

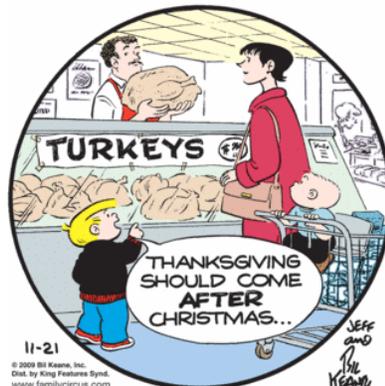
FROM A KID'S POINT OF VIEW

(MAD LIB)

Today we are celebrating \_\_\_\_\_ dinner at \_\_\_\_\_'s  
 house. When we arrived, my \_\_\_\_\_ greeted us with big,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ kiss. Kisses are so \_\_\_\_\_ ! Now we're just  
 waiting for the \_\_\_\_\_ to come out of the oven. My dad is watching  
 \_\_\_\_\_ on TV. He always shouts, " \_\_\_\_\_ "when  
 when his team scores a \_\_\_\_\_. Yesss!! Only \_\_\_\_\_ more  
 minutes until the \_\_\_\_\_ will be ready to eat. I wonder if my  
 mom will let me try the \_\_\_\_\_ first. My grandma makes the best  
 \_\_\_\_\_ pie! It smells like \_\_\_\_\_ ! (Much better than  
 my \_\_\_\_\_. He/She smells like \_\_\_\_\_ !)

Happy \_\_\_\_\_ !

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11-21  
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"...then we'd have more things  
 to be thankful for."

## *Spratley Allen Missionary Circle*

*By Sister Valorie McBee*

Spratley Allen Missionary Circle & Healing Prayer  
By Sister Valorie McBee

*Praise the Lord, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will. Psalm 103:21*

With God's grace and mercy, the Spratley Allen missionaries continue to express their love and kindness to members of our congregation and to those throughout the community. The missionaries donated funds to various organizations such as the Richmond Food Bank, several local schools, and to families who lost everything in a fire. Members are constantly making phone calls and sending greeting cards to those who are in need of hope and inspiration.

The 123<sup>rd</sup> Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Annual Session was held from August 11-13; the theme was "God's Mission During Troubled Times". Because of Covid-19, this year's convention was an online virtual experience that included daily prayer, mission education classes, and evening celebrations with guest speakers.

The mission education class, "When Helping Hurts," was taught by Rev. Dr. Rosalyn Nichols and based upon the book entitled, When Helping Hurts – How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Rev. Dr. Nichols referenced *Colossians 1:15-20*, *Luke 4:17-21*, *Luke 7:22-23* and challenged participants to view missions from a different perspective. She shared several points from this approach. "Helping Hurts" when (1) there are broken systems that contribute to poverty, such as public policy, economic forces and social systems that are ineffective and often times hinder more than help people who are in need. (2) Years of slavery, racial discrimination, social injustices, and housing discrimination have caused much pain and agony. (3) The poor is left feeling inferior, inadequate, and trapped. Although attitudes, aspirations, goals, and lack of determination sometimes contribute to our own circumstances, *broken systems* can cause more harm than good.

Rev. Dr. Nichols offered another viewpoint when she discussed the "Helping without Hurting" approach, and as indicated in the book, helpers must first acknowledge that we are all broken. Our own brokenness stems from our way of thinking. Although we may be economically secure and materially rich, there are those who have developed a "god-complex" (thinking they are better than everyone else), not acknowledging God's grace and provisions. Attitudes and beliefs create our thoughts and feelings which determine our choices and decisions. Therefore we must, (1) acknowledge our own brokenness and imperfections and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us. (2) Develop a different mindset. (3) Redefine poverty. (4) Develop wholistic relationships. (5) Meet people where they are – put people first, then take the necessary steps to help them achieve their goals, use the power of prayer for transformation together. (6) Determine the type of help that leads to long term change.

A helpful first step when working with those in need in any context is to discern whether the situation calls for relief, rehabilitation, or development. Failure to distinguish the difference can do more harm than good in poverty alleviation. (1) **Relief** - the provider gives immediate assistance (as in the parable Jesus told to the disciples about the "good Samaritan", *Luke 10:25-37*). (2) **Rehabilitation** – working with people as they participate in their own recovery. (3) **Development** – a process of ongoing change that moves the "helpers and the helped" closer to being in the right relationship with God, self, others and the rest of creation. Concrete steps in development include (a) Assessing and mobilizing the gifts of the church. (b) Learning about the existing organizations and services in the area. (c) Adopting asset-based participatory and first encounter benevolence policies. With these approaches mission work may be viewed differently and may initiate the possibility of starting a new ministry. Development is not done to or for people, but with people. Development is promoting an empowering process in which all (helpers and the helped) are involved to become what God created them to be.

Another Lott Carey education session involved a panel discussion conducted by (WISE) and based upon Matthew 5:1-16. The facilitator was Sister Angelita Clifton with guest panelists Rev. Dr. Stacey Dandridge and Rev. Robin Kay. God is calling us to do a new thing – we must be creative, ask God for

help and guidance with technology and virtual ministry, stay connected, seek wisdom and continue to assist those in need. Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission is currently embarking upon a service mission that seeks to empower women and promote Lott Carey. Namely, WISE SALT (*Women in Service Everywhere Serving and Learning Together*) is an endeavor and marketplace that will introduce new ministry opportunities annually during the WISE session at the National Convention. The three WISE SALT goals are: • Increase service opportunities for women of all life stages. • Empower, equip, and embrace the next generation through mentoring. • Implement seven strategies to recruit and retain volunteers. WISE SALT needs sisters prepared to serve the Lord with gladness as well as to organize, mobilize and assist with the work of Lott Carey all year-round. (*Sisters who are interested may email WISE Leadership at [lottcareywise1@gmail.com](mailto:lottcareywise1@gmail.com) to join any of the teams such as Prayer Team, Giving Circle, or to acquire a Ministry guide. Lott Carey WISE SALT is also on Facebook*). What a blessing to be a blessing to others!

The Baptist General Convention of Virginia Women's Division Area A virtually celebrated the Week of Prayer through Zoom on October 25. Themed prayers were offered for *self, sisters everywhere, children, youth and men, churches and pastors, communities, schools, teachers, students, frontline workers and first responders, BGC leadership, America and the world.*

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*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 the 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.*

#### A HEALING PRAYER

Composed by Valorie A. McBee (c2009) (Rev. Oct. 2020)

DEAR GOD,

I come before You this day,  
Knowing that You will have Your way.  
Yet, I ask in the name of Jesus,  
That You will place in me...HEALING,  
HEALING of 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.





# SPOTLIGHT on.....

*Lonnie J. Harden*

*By Dawn W. Harden*



## Lonnie J. Harden

was born in the small community of Camilla, Texas near the Trinity River in San Jacinto County; and was the seventh of nine children born to the late Freamon and Mollie Harden. Lonnie accepted Christ and was baptized at the age of thirteen at the Saint Paul Baptist Church in the Rosehill community near Camilla. Growing up as the son of a share cropper, he decided early in life to pursue a career in technology with a focus in the field of engineering. During his high school years, he worked several jobs after school and during the summer months in order to obtain the finances



Sam Houston  
State University

needed to attend college. After graduating from Coldspring High School (later renamed Jones High School), Lonnie attended Sam Houston State University and Texas Southern University studying

**TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

College of Science,  
Engineering & Technology

Mechanical Engineering Design Technology.

While attending night classes at Texas Southern University, he met and several years later married Dawn Williams (known as his Brown Sugar). They are the proud parents of two adult sons, Timothy and Errington.

Lonnie worked studiously for 37 years with Baker Hughes Inc. (Dresses Industries Inc.) serving in several



engineering technology positions until a corporate reorganization retired his project. Always remembering the words of his father, "Prepare for war in the time of peace", Lonnie had prepared for the day that his fulltime employment would end. Thus, when the time came, he was able to walk out the door from a longtime position with a smile on his face and knowing everything was going to be alright.

Shortly after relocating to Houston, Texas he united with the Saint Luke Baptist Church where he served for 24 years in many positions, which included van driver, young adult choir president, Sunday school superintendent, Vacation Bible school director, finance chairman, deacon and chairman of the Deacon Ministry.

In 2000 being Spirit-lead, he and his family joined The Church Without Walls (Brookhollow Baptist Church) pastored by Dr. Ralph Douglas West. As a member of The Church Without Walls, he served as a van driver for the college ministry, teacher for the Men's Discipleship program, coordinator for the Men's Discipleship program for all three campuses, deacon, Vacation Bible school teacher, new-member training teacher and team leader as well as teacher for other classes within the Department of Christian Education.

In 2017 he and Brown Sugar happily relocated to Virginia to be closer to his mother-in-law and other family members. His Virginian friend, James Davis, who is very familiar with the Richmond/Henrico County area and now living in Texas, recommended that they visit the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church in Henrico County where the Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III is Pastor. Later that year, Lonnie and Dawn joined the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church where they are spiritually fed and warmly welcomed by the Pastor and its members. Lonnie has readily become a working, participating member and a true asset to the Zion family. As an active Zion parishioner, he's a member of the Men's Chorus, an engaging member of the Pastor Aide Ministry, and the teacher for the Zion New Members' Class as well as a teacher for the adult Vacation Bible School Class.

His road map to success is "keeping God first in all that he does". Therefore, he emphasizes the 10-10-5-75 rule (Pay God at least 10% of all that you earn, save at least 10% of all that you earn for retirement, save 5% for the "just in case" fund and use the 75% for all other expenses). The "just in case fund" is for those unexpected expenses that might come up, and they will.

Congratulations **LONNIE J. HARDEN** for having been chosen the spotlight person for the December 2020 issue of the RMZ VOICE Newsletter! The Zion family loves you, amiably welcomes you to Virginia and to our church family and thanks God for the blessing!



### 10-10-5-75 RULE

**10** Pay God at least 10% of ALL Earnings

**10** Pay Yourself at least 10% of ALL Earnings (Savings/Retirement)

**5** Put aside 5% in a "Just In Case Fund"

**75** Everything else!



## Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

*We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV*

God doesn't promise any of us that we will escape the turbulent seas of life, but He does promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. His promise assures us that when He permits suffering, He also provides comfort; and only He can still our hearts and quiet our minds. Therefore through difficult times, stand still and trust God to lead you!

To each of our bereaved families and to those who have been hospitalized, undergone surgery, experienced a period of illness, or suffered other afflictions, know that Pastor Cooper, the Diaconate Ministry and your Zion family sincerely extend our genuine support, love, and deeds of kindness to you and your families. As a church family we reach out in sincerity, humility and love to all who are hurting and grieving. Know that together we can heal and grow in understanding and in the peace that is ours through Jesus Christ who knows our most painful moments and provides forgiveness, deliverance and hope in all situations.

- **Trustee Marion McMackle, Sister Maechena R. Gaithers, Brother Nathan McMackle, Brother Bruce McMackle and Brother Stewart Street, Brother Henry Street and Sister Carolyn Johnson, Sister Cassandra Street, Sister Lisa Street,** and a host of relatives and friends mourn their mother, sister, aunt, relative and friend, respectively, and a beloved and faithful Zion member, **Sister Carrie McMackle (92).**
- **Sister Valerie Henson** and Sister Joyce Henson mourn their cousin, *Sister Norma Brewington.*
- **Sister Dawn Harden (Brother Lonnie)** mourns her aunt, *Sister Evelyn Armstrong (92).*
- **Sister Sheila c. Price** and her son, **Damon Price** mourn her step-brother and his uncle, *Brother Arnell (aka Hakeen) Powell, Jr.*
- **Sister Svondai Brown** mourns her father, *Brother Julius E. Hicks.*
- **Sister Arnetta Carter** mourns her cousin, *Sister Maebell Davis.*
- **Sister Cynthia Roane** and her daughter, **Sister Jessie Williford (Brother William)** mourn her father and her grandfather, *Brother Ralph W. Roane, Sr.*
- **Sister Arnetta Wilson** mourns her father-in-law, *Brother Lee Wilson, Jr.*
- **Sister Arleta Chopfield, Sister Hilda Davis and Brother James Chopfield** mourn her daughter and their niece, **Sister Wallisha Chopfield.**
- **Rev. Ronald C. Taylor, Sr. and Sister Debbie Taylor** mourn their son, **Brother Ronald C. Taylor, Jr.**
- **Sister Frances Robinson, Sister Maxine Robinson, Sister Mae Dean Miller, Brother John Robinson and Brother William Robinson (Sister Carolyn)** mourn their niece, *Sister Celeste Berry.*
- **Sister Chloe Dunston** mourns her grandmother, *Sister Mary Dunston.*
- **Sister Valerie White (Brother Tony)** mourns their niece-in-law, *Sister Kemberli Barney of Hinesville, Georgia.*
- **Sister Narcissa Best and Sister Joan Macklin** mourn her brother and her brother-in-law, *Brother Ralph Macklin.*
- **Sister Chelsea Cunningham, Brother Akasha "Arod" Jackson, Sister Brandis Boyd, and Sister Tianna Moody** mourn their grandmother, **Sister Carolyn Moody.**
- **Brother Clarence Kizzie** mourns his nephew, *Brother Edward Johnson.*
- **Sister Betsy Lee, Sister LaTarshia Wooten. And Sister Latoya Lynch** mourn her father and their grandfather, *Brother Lanwood W. Lynch, Sr.*
- **Sister Sheronda Michelle Baker, Sister Tonnesha Baker, Sister Da-Naya Johnson, Sister Sandra J. Thomas, Sister Rosalind Jones, Sister Yvette Williams, and Brother Lenso and Sister Michelle Haywood** mourn their daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece and cousin, **Sister Brittony Baker.**



The *RESOURCE* Page...

Whether you feel VICTORIOUS or DEFEATED as a result of the history-making 2020 Election, the results are in and are proof that it's not how you start, but rather, it's the way you finish! For many months, believers spent ceaseless moments of devotional reading, meditation, and prayer that set a continuous spiritual climate, asking for God's power to help people through periods of emptiness, depression, and/or frustration. The strength of our God is not only needed for unexpected trials but also for everyday living. Thanks to God, each voice has spoken and has delivered a clear victory in the midst of the unsettling noise of the nation. Over and over again we've witnessed the power of Him everyday to power-up. Power over and over again we've witnessed o God to bring the beauty out of ugly situations that's destined to lead to change! Our exhausted nation now has President-elect Biden who will move the country to a new and better chapter, and who exemplifies respect, competence, empathy, integrity, trustworthiness, godliness, and leadership, has the ability to inspire others, and is skillful in providing direction and unity. He is comfortable in his skin and does not have a defensive or an always-right-attitude! Each reader is encouraged to read and ponder the words in *Psalms 15 NIV* and those below.

*If your word is "good as gold"  
And your actions prove it true,  
Others hearing what you say  
Know they can depend on you.  
~~Hess*

Under President-elect Biden's administration, he will represent all people of the United States. Listed below are only a few of the situations the President-elect will confront once his position is official:

- Restore dignity and truth to the presidency.
- Heal the soul of the nation; seek to unite, not divide.
- Respect all former and present participants and their families of all branches of the United States Armed Forces; and keep our country safe.
- Put in place a COVID task force to get this virus under control so that the country can return to some kind of normalcy.
- Improve and expand the Affordable Care Act.
- Build a stronger economy and re-establish our relationship and respect with our allies and leaders throughout the world.
- Develop and embrace a nationwide plan to heal wounds and deal with crime, racism, social injustice, the livelihood of DACA recipients, etc. and reunite children who have been deliberately separated from their parents/guardians.
- Generate "CHANGE" over more of the same.

There will not be a "dèjà vu" of the previous administration. President-elect Biden believes that although we are opponents, we are not enemies. Therefore, let's put the rhetoric behind us so that we can unite, heal and optimistically move the country forward.

The *RESOURCE* Page...

Now, as a body of Christ, we look forward and press on, trusting God and knowing He is still in control. God is with us and we need not fear what's ahead of us! For we believe that prayer is the soil in which hope and healing grow best. God has brought us through sufferings, struggles, and numerous storms that confront us. Consequently, He expects us to be stronger, wiser, and bolder, to worship more and give greater praise to Him. Although we can't repay God, we can certainly do something to make a difference, starting with the following:

- Let God's spirit fill our heart so that He is seen in all we do, heard in every word we utter, and felt in every deed we perform.
- Pray from the heart.
- Know that "faith" is fruitful.
- Invest in our children so that it is an enduring impact---teach, set good example.
- Gain self-control, by giving Christ control.
- Be courageous and true to your word.
- Don't try to do everything but always do your part.
- Use our gifts unselfishly within the body of Christ to build up, strengthen, and help to carry out God's purpose in our lives.
- Be respectful and civil to others while being able to agree to disagree—in love.
- Seek to be a better person in every aspect of your being.
- Know that all things are possible through Christ Jesus and whenever we work together.
- Guard what comes out of your mouth, remembering that rash accusations, angry words, and verbal abuse can do immeasurable and lifelong damage. Think before you speak.
- ~~Never~~ lose hope and the joy of being an inheritor of the Kingdom of God.
- Persevere in doing the right thing.
- Put God first in everything you do.
- Model God's love by doing what we can to serve others.



#1  
Keep God First

By no measure are we perfect, but if we choose to walk the road of life with Jesus, we can flourish in the face of hardship or any situation because of God's power is at work within us. In all situations, we may hope for the best, but the LORD offers us the best hope—He'll show us new ways to work in whatever situation we find ourselves.

*Our LIVES speak louder than our WORDS!*

*17th Appreciation Day Celebration*  
**TRIBUTES TO PASTOR COOPER**

*by Deacon Mary Kemp*



The Zion family and friends are elated to express written and videoed congratulatory messages to Pastor Cooper on the Pastor and People 17<sup>th</sup> Appreciation Day. This edition of the RMZ VOICE is not large enough to contain all the expressions of appreciation! A few of the individual and Zion family tributes are included. The beautifully videoed expressions from several church individuals, including Dedra Hampton and Lamont Bagby have been shared using other mediums. In addition, Mayor Levar Stoney of Richmond submitted a very poignant video, mentioning *1 Corinthians 16:13* in his remarks.

Happy 17th Anniversary to our beloved Pastor, Roscoe D. Cooper III  
 My family and I honor and appreciate you. We are truly blessed to be under your leadership. Thank you for all you do for me, my family, our church and our community. We are blessed because of your faithfulness to lead us in the way that God has directed you to. Thank you for everything. May God bless you always.

*Love,*  
*Barbara Garrett, Fred Moffett,*  
*and Altonia Garrett*

I just want to say I appreciate you and your presence at Rising Mount Zion. This pandemic has turned my world upside down and it was a saving grace to be able to worship, pray, and have Bible study to keep me. Thank you for showing up and showing out! I pray that God blesses you and your family and that God continues to speak to us through you.  
**Thank you and CONGRATULATIONS on 17 years of service!!!**

*The Burton Family*

**Pastor Cooper,**

As allegiance to God you came to RMZBC 17 years ago with a purpose and desire to do good work, embracing the Zion family as spiritual partners on God's team. Thank you for your unmatched divine guidance, compassionate friendship, strong leadership, and unbiased fellowship. We love and appreciate you and expect to enjoy many more incredible years of growth and prosperity as

Pastor  
 and  
 People  
 together as one!

Blessings,  
*Bill and Mary Kemp*

**W**OW! Pastor Cooper it seems like yesterday, instead of seventeen years ago that you arrived at the historical Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church as an anointed, energetic, humble and a purpose-driven Pastor with a vision! Since then the church has risen to new heights, growing spiritually, numerically, financially, physically, academically, and socially sound in every aspect of its existence. Therefore, the Zion body of believers are honored to call you our Pastor and thank God for sending to us one of His chosen sons, who is spiritually anointed, fervently guided, and academically prepared for the assignment God has given you.

So Pastor, it is our sincere pleasure and great honor to pay tribute, show **love**, respect, and appreciation to you on this your "Appreciation" Sunday celebrated on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020.

*What a worthy testament of faith you are in showing us how to overcome obstacles with dignity and becoming better, not bitter in all situations! You are a true example of being a prolific preacher/teacher and good leader who produces good fruit, never claiming perfection, but always striving for excellence! Perhaps you don't always know our gratitude toward you for the things you do for us and we dare not take for granted: We thank you for praying for us, caring for us, loving us, encouraging us, helping us, blessing us, and teaching us to open our hearts to the needs of and compassion for people around us. Without a doubt, your Christ-like character has a tremendous impact on the attitudes of the Zion body that encourages us to be a better people. In the midst of the pandemic virus you have been our spiritual link that kept us grounded and spiritually connected through the Sunday Morning Online Worship Services, the Prayer Calls on Monday nights, the Bible Study sessions on Wednesday evenings, and the in-person, drive-in, Blessing of Communion offered on our campus parking lot each second Sunday. Week after week, you remind us that the joy of the Lord is not based on circumstances; prayer and faith can change things; darkness does not last forever; and that we should never, ever lose hope! It is our prayer Pastor Cooper that we bless your heart happy by our social distancing hugs, broad smiles, floating kisses, kind words and expressions, and gifts of love. We find JOY in the Lord through your spoken words and in the tasks before us each day. We experience the PEACE of the Lord in the anointing exhibited in your deeds toward us. You show us LOVE in our wellness, illness and death of loved ones and friends that comfort and embrace us in the PRESENCE of the Lord. We clearly see the SPIRIT of the Lord in your immeasurable energy that seems not to be second even to the energized bunny (smile)! The GOODNESS of the Lord blesses your humble spirit that never looks down on another except to lift him up. The FAITHFULNESS of the Lord ordains your-never-too-busy-schedule to gently tend to the flock that God has blessed you to have! And, yes, Pastor Cooper, the DIVINE WORD of the Lord in which you steadfastly preach encourages us to conform more closely to God's will in our daily living; and it gives hope to the broken and battered!*

**Congratulations!**  
**Pastor, DR. ROSCOE D. COOPER III**  
**We love, appreciate, remember, and thank you for being YOU!**  
**May God grant us many more blissful years together as PASTOR and PEOPLE!**  
**God bless you always**  
**Your Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church Family**

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Furthermore, the Zion family and friends were so blessed to have the Sunday worship online service delivered by a prolific evangelist, the Rev. Dr. Joseph D. Turner, Pastor of the Matthews Memorial Missionary Baptist Church located in Washington, D. C. Dr. Turner spoke boldly and inspiringly on the subject entitled, "Divine Confirmation" and chose as his basic scriptural text, *Exodus 4:1-4*. Without hesitancy he captured the attention of the viewers and listeners as he compared the *Waze GPS* that gives a driver driving directions and his location as well as pin points locations of radar and disruptions along the driver's route, to the *Holy Spirit* deposited in the believer that guides, leads and directs us according to the Will of God. God gave instructions to Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Because Moses doubted that the people would believe God had sent him, God gave him several signs, using the example of power in sight. God changes Moses' staff to a snake, and then back to a staff. Moses had fear of the snake and ran from it because it is a symbol of power in Egypt. After giving Moses several signs to make the people believe He had been sent by God, Moses gave excuses of his incompetence to speak well. However, Dr. Turner emphasized that no power is greater than God who assured Moses that He is always with him as He is with us. Often times, we, like Moses, are handicapped or hindered by the hypothetical (a tendency to doubt) rather than to remember and listen to God's promises to us. We must learn to get rid of the "what if's" in our lives and walk by faith, not by sight, believing that when God responds, He may chastise, discipline or reject our request, but in due season He'll give us His "Divine Confirmation". Although we can't see God, He confirms His presence, blesses and keeps us, does what we can't do, walks with us, holds our hands, makes crooked ways— straight, rough places — smooth, and even moments of betrayal, hurt, and/or loss, He's with us! Because God is our light and salvation, we should not be dismayed nor have a spirit of fear for He will take care of us and bring us out and over all situations. As believers, we inherit the power of God. Therefore, we must make up in our minds to not stop, but to go higher with God, always praising and glorifying Him for His presence in our lives. Thank you Dr. Turner for a blessed message that's worthy to be etched in our memories!

Two Henrico County policemen escorted a long line of cars (some decorated) honking horns and blinking lights to the church where they drove in a lane adorned with purple and gray balloons, stopping to offer love gifts, and joyfully greet the Pastor. The presentation concluded a wonderful day of love and appreciation! **Glory to God for His goodness, love and favor shown to the RMZBC family!!!**

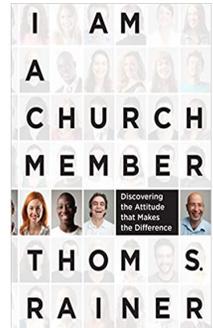
# BOOK REVIEW

## I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

Discovering the Attitude That Makes the Difference

By Thom S. Rainer

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



**M**any of us joined the church with the mindset that it was a privilege to be a part of the body, as if we were the members of a country club experience. We may have adopted an unbiblical view of what it means to be a church member. We often joined with the expectation of receiving benefits and rewards rather than with the intention of giving to and serving others. There should be an essential attitude of love within the church and we must come into the body with the understanding that all members have an important role to play in the building and sustaining of the church. Although we are all different, we all have unique gifts and should use them to work together to create a better church, a better world.

Church members are expected to build on the foundation of love; to love one another as Christ loves the church. We are called to love even the unlovable. We are to pray for our pastors and fellow members. We are to encourage one another without condemnation. We should embrace and exhort the CEOs (Christmas and Easter Only) members without judgment, while encouraging them to share their gifts and bounty in service to the church. Membership in the church requires that we donate our tithes, time and talents to the church. Contributing financially without giving of those things is not biblical membership. Biblical members give freely, cheerfully and with no strings attached. It is giving naturally, without expressing conditions for the gifts which we have provided. *1 Corinthians 12:27-28 NIV - Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

The church should be unified by the many parts found within. Some of us are the **eyes**, some are

the **ears**, the **nose** and others are the **foot** and the **hand**. All the parts together become “**one body**” that is necessary for the operation of the church and the serving of God’s purpose for His people. To be an inactive member is an oxymoron, given what is required of the church member.

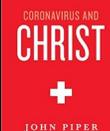
Membership means that everything we say and do should be based on the foundation of authentic, unconditional love. Members should be biblically functioning, giving joyfully and abundantly, serving and ministering without hesitation. Church members should pledge their faith and allegiance to be a source of unity for the sake of the gospel; not given to gossip or dissension among the ranks. We must lead our families to be healthy and steadfast in the Godly principles of the church. We should study together and pray together for the pastors, leaders and for the welfare of the church and people. We should worship and give praise together. Church membership is a gift and it is to be treasured. Moreover, it should call us to accept an opportunity to serve and to love others in and outside of the church.

We may begin to make a change in our world when we begin to embrace the true mindset of being a church member. We can restore our churches to better health, which will be evident in our outreach ministries. We can help to bring about the changes we hope to see in our church, in our communities and in the nation. Let us all become biblical, functioning church members.

Suggested Reading

“Coronavirus and CHRIST”

By  
John Piper





## How Do You Tell the Difference Between Flu and Covid19?

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD

Simple answer....It is nearly impossible to tell the difference between influenza and COVID19 without a test. Both illnesses have such similar symptoms that it should be assumed that either one of these viruses could be the cause.

**Body aches, sore throat, fever and chills, cough** are characteristic symptoms of both illnesses. Both viruses can cause **vomiting** and **diarrhea**. **Fatigue** and **headaches** are also symptoms shared by the two. When considering some differences, one of these **differences** is that the **flu symptoms** will tend to come on more with a **rapid onset** as oppose to **COVID19** which comes on with a **more gradual** onset of symptoms. Persons with **COVID19** may tend to develop **shortness of breath** along with the **cough which can progress and become more severe**. Another difference is that persons with the flu will typically feel sick for about a week of the illness while Covid19 symptoms may continue for 2 to 3 additional weeks or longer.

**One distinct difference** between these two viruses is that **COVID19** is **more likely than the flu to cause the loss of the sense of smell or taste**. This **does not occur for everyone** with COVID19, so it is not a reliable way to tell the viruses apart.

Both flu and COVID19 are spread through respiratory droplets from the nose and mouth and both can spread before people know that they are sick. The **flu** has a shorter incubation period of **1 to 4 days** which means it may take this amount of time for you to feel sick after exposure to the virus. **COVID19** has a longer incubation period of **2 to 14 days** from the time of exposure to the time that you may get sick. However, the average time that most persons come down with symptoms from COVID19 after exposure to the virus is about 4 to 6 days. COVID 19 is thought to be much more contagious the influenza.

Preventing the flu begin with taking the flu vaccine. Everyone is being urged to take their flu vaccine to help reduce the possible outbreak of influenza which could overwhelm the healthcare system with the current increasing number of cases of the COVID19. **Precautions to protect against infection from COVID19 include wearing masks, social distancing and frequent hand washing which also is hoped to help slow the spread of the flu.**

Both influenza and COVID19 can results in severe illness and complications. Those at highest risk are the older adults and those with underlying medical conditions. Young children are at higher risk of severe illness from flu. Complications include pneumonia, respiratory failure, worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions, multiple-organ system failure (kidney failure, liver failure, heart injury). **An additional complication associated with COVID19 is the development of blood clots which can occur in the veins of the lungs, heart, legs or brain.**

So **what to do** if you think you have the flu or COVID19? The best answer to this question is to **get tested for the flu and COVID19**. It is thought, currently, that the chances of having both infections at the same time, is low. So, if you are coming down when any of the telltale signs of these viruses, it is important to seek medical care.

Take care of your immune system! Stay as healthy as healthy as possible!! Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep will help boost your immune system to help keep you well!

### Symptom Comparison

Symptoms	Allergies	Cold	Influenza (Flu)	Coronavirus COVID-19
Body Aches	Never	Often	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Sometimes	Often	Often	Often
Diarrhea/GI	Rare	Rare	Sometimes	Sometimes
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Often
Fever / Chills / Shaking	Never	Rare	Often	Often
Headache	Rare	Rare	Often	Sometimes
Loss of Taste or Smell	Never	Never	Never	Sometimes
Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing	Rare	Rare	Rare	Often
Sneezing	Often	Often	Rare	Rare
Sore Throat	Rare	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes
Stuffy Nose	Often	Often	Sometimes	Rare

## Virtual Learning in Area Schools: *The New Normal?*

By Sally Collins

Virtual learning, often called e-learning or digital learning, is defined by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy as using computer software, the internet or both to deliver instruction to students. For years the practice of learning via computers and the internet has been mostly linked to higher education. However, K-12 education is now expanding its role in the virtual learning world. According to The Connection Academy, more than 2.7 million students took part in blended or on-line programs in 2014. While educators across the country found themselves at various stages of integrating virtual learning, few would be prepared for the abrupt and sudden need for virtual education across the board that was thrust upon them by the deadly coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

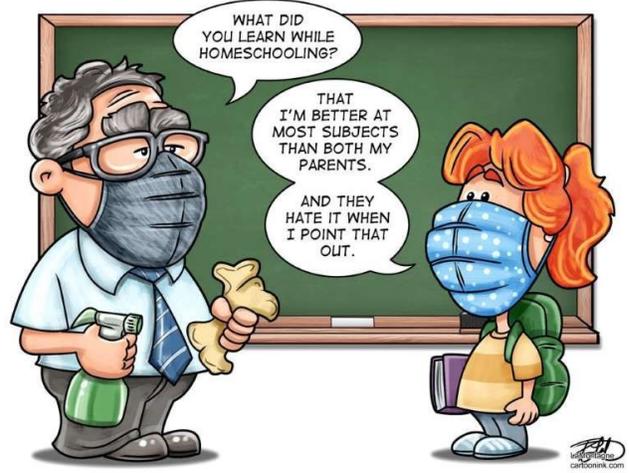
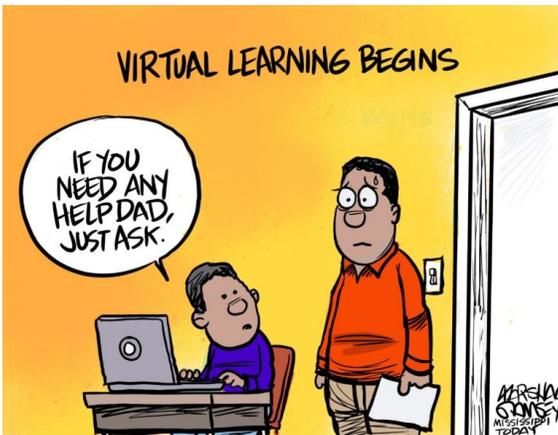
As reminded by the personal service announcement (PSA): Teachers are learning new ways to teach; parents are learning to lesson plan; students are learning a new normal.

In March of 2020 states began wide-spread school closures to cope with the coronavirus fall-out. Just as educators, parents and students were forced to grapple with the “new normal” across the country, those involved in the Richmond area school systems were no exception. At the onset of COVID-19, distance learning during a pandemic had no precedent. Area school administrators faced a myriad of challenges as they waded into the uncharted waters of remote learning for their entire student population. To paraphrase the words of Jaime Saavedo, The mission of all education systems is the same--to overcome the learning crises that we already face as we respond to the pandemic that has overtaken us. The challenge today is to reduce as much as possible the negative impact of this pandemic on learning and schooling, build on the experience and get back to a path of improvement in learning.

After facing state-wide closures area schools were forced to adapt quickly to the remote learning format. While administrators, teachers, parents and students made valiant attempts to cope, a change of such magnitude impacted the lives of all involved. As I conducted interviews, some concerns did emerge. The words of Jason, a high school freshman, reflect what many young people found challenging. When he first heard that schools would be closing for two weeks, he was excited, but as time dragged by he missed school and his friends. “It messed with my head,” he said. “I would arise in the morning, get dressed, but I had nowhere to go. Settling down in the beginning was difficult, but in the long run it was good. I became



disciplined and learned to focus under new conditions.” Others spoke of missing in-person exchange of ideas with teachers and classmates and mastering new ways of using the technology. Still others were just starved for social interaction. Parents were challenged to new ways of thinking as they tried to maintain healthy spaces for their families and create a special learning environment for their children in their homes. As the leaders forge ahead under daunting circumstances their greatest challenge is to meet the needs of every child in their charge, constantly exploring ways to protect the well-being of students, staff and their families. What are their plans? According to the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, October 9, 2020 *Richmond Public Schools* is staying virtual learning through at least 2021 with the option to re-evaluate the situation later. *Hanover County* welcomed students back in September. *Chesterfield County* is returning students to classrooms in waves and *Henrico County*, as it prepares to ramp up, has allowed select students back into some classrooms. The words of Jason Kamras, superintendent of Richmond Public Schools, probably resonate with school leaders throughout the area, “I just want to acknowledge how difficult it is. As I have shared, there is no one right solution. No matter what path we take this will cause inconvenience or hardships for some people.” Nevertheless, while area leaders acknowledge “growing pains” the goal is to support the community, support the parents and provide the best opportunities for young people to successfully learn and continue to grow academically.



© Provided by Calgary Herald Patrick LaMontagne cartoon for the Calgary Herald September 2020

### Virtual Learning Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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**W H T H R I V I D R I V**  
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**I T R T I Y A A R**  
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**V I R T A Y . T R T D A D D**  
 19 1 2 26 25 13 8 8 12 26 2 25 9 26 24 17 23 13 21 23 23 17  
**Y R B T .**  
 12 17 25 2 14 22 9 26



Santa whispered,  
 "Teach the Children the true  
 meaning of Christmas"



- The Star:** A heavenly sign of prophecy fulfilled long ages ago - the shining hope of mankind.
- Red:** The first color of Christmas symbolizing the Savior's sacrifice for all.
- Fir Tree:** Evergreen - The second color of Christmas shows everlasting life. The needles point Heavenward.
- The Bell:** Rings out to guide lost sheep back to the fold - signifying all are precious in the eyes of the Lord.
- The Candle:** A mirror of starlight reflecting our thanks for the Star of Bethlehem.
- Gift Bow:** Tied as we should all be tied together in bonds of goodwill forever.
- Candy Cane:** The shepherd's crook used to bring lambs back into the fold - A reminder that we are all our brother's keeper.
- The Wreath:** A symbol of the never ending eternal nature of love, having no beginning and no end.



## **CHRIST BELL**

### **THE BELL**

#### **I KNOW WHO I AM**

I am God's child (*John 1:12*)  
 I am Christ's friend (*John 15:15*)  
 I am united with the Lord (*1 Cor. 6:17*)  
 I am bought with a price (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*)  
 I am a saint (set apart for God). (*Eph. 1:1*)  
 I am a personal witness of Christ. (*Acts 1:18*)  
 I am the salt & light of the earth (*Matt 5:13-14*)  
 I am a member of the body of Christ (*1 Cor 12:27*)  
 I am a citizen of heaven. I am significant (*Phil 3:20*)  
 I am free forever from condemnation. (*Rom. 8: 1-2*)  
 I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (*Eph. 2:18*)  
 I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (*Eph. 2:6*)  
 I am a minister of reconciliation for God (*2 Cor 5:17-21*)  
 I cannot be separated from the love of God (*Rom 8:35-39*)  
 I am established, anointed, sealed by God (*2 Cor 1:21-22*)  
 I am assured all things work together for good (*Rom. 8: 28*)  
 I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (*John 15: 16*)  
 I may approach God with freedom and confidence (*Eph. 3: 12*)  
 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (*Phil. 4:13*)  
 I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (*John 15: 1-5*)  
 I am God's temple (*1 Cor. 3: 16*). I am complete in Christ (*Col. 2: 10*)  
 I am hidden with Christ in God (*Col. 3:3*). I have been justified (*Romans 5:1*)  
 I am God's co-worker (*1Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1*). I am God's workmanship (*Eph. 2:10*)  
 I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (*Phil.1: 5*)  
 I have been redeemed and forgiven (*Col 1:14*). I have been adopted as God's child (*Eph 1:5*)  
 I belong to God  
 Do you know  
 Who you are?

*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
 The LORD make His face shine upon you  
 And be gracious to you;  
 The LORD turn His face toward you  
 And give you peace...*

*~Numbers 6:24-26 NIV~*



# Activity Page

## Advent Word Search Puzzle

See if you can find the Advent words in the puzzle below!

**The Staff**

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

ADVENT	CHRISTMAS	GIFTS	CALENDAR
DECORATE	CARDS	SHOPPING	COOKING
COOKIES	FRIENDS	SNOWMAN	SANTA
TREE	LIGHTS	BELLS	CAROLS

Www.ActivityVillage.co.uk—Keeping Kids Busy



12-22  
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“... When the shepherds came they had a place to park their sheep.”



4-12  
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“It would've been quicker if Paul just posted his letters to the Corinthians on his Facebook page.”

Cryptogram Answer: Whether using videos or live instruction, you can learn virtually. Trust God and do your best.