

## PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

### God's Paradise Restoration Plan: Part IV MARY, the mother of Jesus THE LORD IS WITH YOU!

**Mary, the mother of Jesus, walked with God in the most unique way.** Mary was a young woman chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. God chose Mary out of all the women in her generation.

*In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1: 26-35 NIV)*

**Mary became pregnant with Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.** It was the Holy Spirit, the power of God that overshadowed her. Mary carried the Messiah, the baby Jesus, inside of her, in her womb, a womb made of flesh and blood. This was a time of the miraculous, the uncommon, the impossible becoming possible. This was God's doing and Mary, a woman of faith, obedience, humility, and a fear of The Lord, would be a part of it all. She was filled with humility and courage, meekness and strength. Mary had faith in God. She had faith in God's promises and faith in God's power to bring those promises to fulfillment. It took faith, a great deal of faith, for Mary to accept what the angel told her. **It took faith** to accept the extraordinary will of God in what seemed to be an ordinary life. **It took faith** to overshadow the fear and uncertainty of not knowing to bring forth a response of trust **in the faithfulness of the All-Knowing God.** Mary said, "I am The Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled." **It took faith!**

*Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses].<sup>2</sup> For by this [kind of] faith the people of old gained [divine] approval. (Hebrews 11:1-2 AMP)*

Imagine **the beginning of the human story.** God is in the Garden of Eden rebuking the serpent. God declares that the Seed of Eve will crush the devil's head. As God is saying this, the divine eyes are scanning the future, looking for a mother. God's gaze stretches past the law and the prophets and into the New Testament. As **the entirety of human history unfolds before God,**

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God sees millions of suitable women with faith. So, God decides to shorten the list. *“To demonstrate my glory, I will choose a woman with no name from a town of no significance in a country of no consequence.”* So, God whittles down the list and lands on Mary. In God’s eyes, **Mary was the right person at the right time! So are you and me!**

Our focus this Advent Season has been, **“Pregnant with Possibilities.”** The phrase, *Pregnant with Possibilities*, means to be filled with potential, new life, new ideas, and exciting opportunities that are yet to be fully realized. We are all, in some way, *pregnant with possibilities* essentially carrying the potential for positive change and growth within ourselves. This is God’s will for us. *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”* (John 15:8 NIV)

**We will not give birth to a Messiah, but God will bear fruit in our lives.** We don’t need to come up with another program or devise another theological assertion/idea or start a new church. We don’t need to raise more money or boost our reputation to prove that we are “good.” We don’t need to have the most or best decorations in our neighborhood, but **we must allow the excitement and expectation of God’s presence, God’s love, and God’s character to overshadow us.** We must be willing to carry the hope of God’s kingdom come inside of us. We must focus on God’s faithfulness to bring forth the divine plan of salvation. **We must finally acknowledge, once and for all, that we need a Savior!**

**May it be with us all this Holy Season of Advent and Christmas, a new and fresh discovery and experience of Jesus the Christ, fully human-fully Divine...IMMANUEL, God with us!**

In Christ’s service with you.

Shalom,

Dr. Natalie C. Wimberly



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### **Welcome to the Christmas Season.**

Some of my most memorable memories of Christmas Past, are the events I enjoyed at our Church. **Starting with the Women's Association Dinner and Communion.** This time together with family and friends gave me a peaceful and meaningful feeling for the real reason for Christmas.

The church was always beautifully decorated on **Hanging of the Greens Sunday.** Bringing in the poinsettias and the placing of the Chrismon on the church tree made our sanctuary come alive with the beauty of the season. Then the **Fellowship Committee always provided us with a delicious brunch** in our hall after the service.

Midnight Christmas Eve service was very important to me – the reading and singing of Jesus's birth gave me the true meaning of this season. The lighting of the Candles and the singing of "*Silent Night*" made me realize all the true feeling of this season – the birth of the Christ Child, Jesus.

Please come and join us during this Christmas Season and make memories of your own.

*Susan Ogden,*

*Administrator/President*

## MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Christmas is a time of giving, and with your contributions to our Missions Program, the committee is able to support, not only our local groups, but contribute far and wide. We sent a check \$1,100.00 to a small fishing community in Aripeku, FL devastated by the last hurricane.

Our Southern Missionary, **Pat and Ken Zacharias,** delivered this check to the minister of the Aripeku Baptist Church. This will help them with the rebuilding of their community.

We also sent a check to **Warren County Family Services** to help make the families in our area have a brighter Christmas.

We will continue to support **Open Door's Code Blue program.** Finally, we provide funds to support our three international students.

The Mission's Committee thanks you for your support and want you and your families a joyous and meaningful Christmas Season.

Mission Committee Members - *Mary Alice Clickner, Patty Zacharias, Susan Ogden*

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## FINANCE REPORT

Thank you to all who have sent in their pledges. Please let me know if you would like a box of envelopes by emailing me at [nadig@aol.com](mailto:nadig@aol.com). We are planning to recycle pledge boxes from past years rather than order an entire new years' worth as they come in large amounts we really do not require. If you use envelopes, please remember to put your name on them as the numbers will not be valid.

Ed Szmul continues to learn the job of Financial Secretary. At our next Council meeting Ed will be formally introduced for the position and voted on as our next Financial Secretary. Both Janet Wilson and Lin Brown have been helping Ed learn "*the ropes*". Thank you, Janet and Lin.

Ken Zacharias continues to help out from Florida as Co-Treasurer, but would really like to "*retire*" from that position. If anyone would like to serve as Assistant Treasurer or Assistant Financial Secretary, please let us know. It would be wonderful to have a full staff of officers to share the duties and take over when one of us is not available.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.  
*Bonnie Nadig, Co-Treasurer*

## HCC DECEMBER CHALLENGE: COURAGE

*"Have I not commanded you?"*

*Be strong and of good COURAGE; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 NKJV)*

**Courage** is the ability to act in obedience to God's will and purposes, even when faced with fear, difficulty, or danger.

The **biblical characteristic of courage** is an essential quality for believers as they navigate through the challenges and uncertainties of life.

**Courage** is not the absence of fear but rather the willingness to act in obedience to God's calling and purposes, relying on His strength and guidance. The Bible provides numerous examples of individuals who displayed remarkable courage, empowered by their faith in God.

### WHEN SCIENCE GETS A LITTLE CLOSER TO PERCEIVING GOD'S WISDOM

#### **Physiological response:**

While experiencing fear in a courageous act is normal, individuals who demonstrate courage may show a reduced physiological response like lower heart rate and blood pressure compared to those who succumb to fear completely.

Furthermore, research suggests that having courage can positively affect the body by reducing stress levels, improving overall well-being.

In 2010, Israeli researchers found that activity in a part of the human brain called the subgenual anterior cingulate cortex (sgACC) is associated with courageous behavior. The neuronal connections in the sgACC can be strengthened by mindfully practicing courage such as mentally reframing our fears in the context of a bigger picture allows us to stay in the moment and avoid a sense of impotence.

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## WORSHIP COMMITTEE - December 2024

Submitted by Melissa Ferrie-Healy

*Is there room at your Inn?*

The season of Advent is upon us – a time to prepare for the everlasting light of Christ to cast out the encroaching darkness. Baby Jesus is on his way, ready to be born again! Have you saved a room for him at the “Inn” of your heart? Will you be ready to leave your flocks at the angel’s bidding to see the newborn son of God? Are you prepared to follow the star wherever it leads so that you may worship and adore the newborn king?

We are quick to answer, “Yes, of course!” but the lure of holiday busyness is especially enticing at this time of year. We have houses to decorate, trees to trim, cookies to bake, gifts to wrap, cards to write, parties to host, concerts to attend – so many traditions to tend! And with so much to do, and so much fun to be had, it’s easy to sight of the true “reason for the season.” In fact, we might be so busy, we may not even miss it! But when the Advent season has come and gone, it’s not the hollow facade of busyness that will sustain us. The warmth from fond memories of time spent with friends and loved ones may linger for a while, but ultimately, it’s having carved out a space for Jesus in our hearts that will best sustain us throughout the coming year.

I am grateful to have come across the writing of Emily P. Freeman (*The Next Right Thing*) in recent weeks, just in time to save myself from the siren song of holiday “To Do” lists. I invite you to consider the following November 18<sup>th</sup> Instagram post from Emily’s *Quiet Collection*:

***If you had to narrow down what you hope for this Advent season,  
what would it be in one word?  
Hope – Peace – Joy – Love***

Whatever your one word, protect your peace and sanity this Advent season. Make room at the “Inn.” Leave your flocks. Follow the star. And above all else, welcome Jesus with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

### Advent/Christmas Worship at Harrisena

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|-------|--|
| 12/1  | <u>HOPE</u> : Communion (9:30 a.m.)                            |
| 12/7  | Women’s Association Christmas Brunch (10:00 a.m.)              |
| 12/8  | <u>PEACE</u> : Hanging of the Greens /Brunch (9:30/11:00 a.m.) |
| 12/15 | <u>JOY</u> : Special Music (9:30 a.m.)                         |
| 12/22 | <u>LOVE</u> : Christmas Sunday (9:30 a.m.)                     |
| 12/24 | Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service (6:00 p.m.)        |

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The Worship Committee can always use help:

- Reading Scripture\*
- Ushering/Greeting
- Providing flowers
- Walking the "Light of Christ" to and from the altar
- **Serving Communion**
- **Leading the congregation in song**
- **Sharing special music**

**\* Christine Burke has graciously offered to help anyone with a desire to approach the lectern with CONFIDENCE and SKILL. We would love to hear God's word spoken with YOUR voice!**

**Sign-up sheets are located in Robinson Hall at the Education Building.**

2024-25 Worship Committee Members: *Christine Burke, Melissa Ferrie-Healy and Diane Henderson. Doris O'Rourke: Flowers.*

#### **HARRISENA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.**

*Submitted by Doris*

**We are hosting our Communion Brunch on Saturday, December 7th at 10 A.M. It is a reminder of the Advent Season as we prepare for Christmas. Please join us and bring a dish to share, your place setting, and a grab bag gift for our game. (under \$8)**

**Rev. Wimberly will serve communion which is open to all.**

#### **FLOWER COMMITTEE**

**The Season of Advent is upon us! The poinsettias that we order will be decorating our church and Hall.**

**We hope you will all notice the Flower Order Form in the Worship bulletins and this Harbinger and place your order (with money attached) in the office mailbox or in the Collection plate on Sundays.**

**Thank you so much & have a very Merry Christmas!**

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**TIME TO ORDER YOUR POINSETTIA FOR CHRISTMAS!!**

I would like to ORDER \_\_\_ Poinsettia(s) at \$15 each. Please list as follows:

*IN MEMORY of*

\_\_\_\_\_

OR

*IN HONOR of*

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_/Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to *HARRISENA FLOWER FUND*,

c/o Harrisena Community Church, 1616 Ridge Road, Queensbury, NY 12804

**ALL Orders must be into the office by MONDAY, December 16<sup>th</sup>!!**





- **STORY TIME AND SING A LONG with Mrs. Claus!**
  - **Featuring Noreen Szmul as Mrs. Claus!**



- ***BRING YOUR KIDS FOR A WONDERFUL TIME***
  - ***WITH MRS. CLAUS!***
- **WHEN: December 6th, 13th, and 20<sup>th</sup>!**
- **WHERE: HARRISENA COMMUNITY CHURCH (Robinson Hall)**



## December 2024

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY                   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY                  | FRIDAY                     | SATURDAY  |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent                        | <b>2</b> 5:30 am Prayer  | <b>3</b> 5:30 am Prayer 1- Conversation                                    | <b>4</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>Lectio Divina – ZOOM 10 am  | <b>5</b> 5:30 am Prayer   | <b>6</b> 5:30 am Prayer..  | <b>7</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br><b>10 – Women’s Communion &amp; Brunch</b> |
| <b>8</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>Worship @9:30<br><b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> | <b>9</b> 5:30 am Prayer  | <b>10</b> 5:30 am Prayer; 1- Conversation                                  | <b>11</b> 5:30 am Prayer; <u>1-3- Kingdom Co-op.</u> ;<br>Lectio Divina – ZOOM 10 am<br>AA @7:30 | <b>12</b> 5:30 am Prayer; | <b>13</b> 5:30 am Prayer.. | <b>14</b> 5:30 am Prayer  |
| <b>15</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br><i>Hanging of the Greens Worship @ 9:30</i>            | <b>16</b> 5:30 am Prayer | <b>17</b> 5:30 am Prayer; 1- Conversation                                  | <b>18</b> 5:30 am Prayer; <b>LGGC</b><br>Lectio Divina – ZOOM 10 am<br>AA @7:30                  | <b>19</b> 5:30 am Prayer  | <b>20</b> 5:30 am Prayer   | <b>21</b> 5:30 am Prayer  |
| <b>22</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>Worship Service @HCC @9:30                             | <b>23</b> 5:30 am Prayer | <b>24</b> 5:30 am Prayer;<br><b>HCC/Oneida Christmas Eve Service- 6 pm</b> | <b>25</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>AA @7:30   | <b>26</b> 5:30 am Prayer  | <b>27</b> 5:30 am Prayer   | <b>28</b> 5:30 am Prayer  |
| <b>29</b> 5:30 am Prayer<br>Worship @ 9:30   | <b>30</b> 5:30 am Prayer | <b>31</b> 5:30 am Prayer; 1- Conversation                                  |  |                           |                            |   |

**JOIN US FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP @ 9:30 a.m.** in the Harrisena Community Church sanctuary. You can also join our worship service via livestream at Harrisena.org. Click on the **FACEBOOK** link at the top right-hand side of the website to the livestream of the service.

**December Birthdays:** 5) Patricia Girard; 6) Judy Barcy; 11) Brian Walker; 14) Tatum Chase; 15) Doug Irving; 18) Erik Robinson; 19) Peter Cartier, Robin Dutcher; 20) Brynne Chase, Susan Urrico; 22) Wally Madon; 24) Cindy Farbaniec, Dodi Robinson; 25) Barry Jones, Robert Tucker, Jr.; 30) Stephanie Carte, Melissa Ferris, Natalia Helffrich.

**CELEBRATION FRIDAYS!!** Send your special events and celebrations to the church office for our **CELEBRATION FRIDAY** email publication. This is our way of sharing the blessings of God with each other as we live filled with gratitude for all that God is doing in our lives.

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## **Long-Term Prayer Requests – December**

*Please remember the following members and friends who need our prayers of love and encouragement.*

### **In Facilities**

Cindy Farbaniec – Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga  
Manu Malkani – Fort Hudson Health Center  
Marilyn Somerville – Coburn Village

### **At Home**

Laura Avent – member of Harrisena  
Kathleen Dumont – Niece of Brandy Madon  
Rev. Patti Girard – Friend of Harrisena  
Randy Huber – Husband of Cindy Huber  
Douglas Jones – Son-in-law of Art Norton  
Cecilia Lanpher – Neighbor of Donna Davidson-Smith  
Wendy Leyonmark – Sister of Cindy Huber  
Ann Malkani – Neighbor of Joanne Beck  
Robert Marshall – Friend of the Straut family  
Christopher Nobile – Son of Jim & Eleanor Nobile  
Gay Smith - Member  
Sharon Sturdevant – Daughter of Marilyn Somerville  
Fran Tucker – Mother of Robert Tucker

*Our love and prayers are with you.*



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## Members and Friends in the Military

*Please update the status of anyone you know on this list as soon as information is available.*

Andrew Bigelow (Army), son of Karen Bigelow—serving stateside

Derek Dumas—stateside

Joseph Hubbard (Army) – stateside

Wes McQueen, nephew of Dodi/Rev. Robinson- serving stateside

Tony Mitchell (USAF) - serving in Afghanistan.

Kaleb Parker (Army), grandson of Rev. Dr. Wimberly – serving stateside

Griffith Parry (West Point Military Academy), relative of Griffith Parry- serving in Poland

James Pearson (USAF)

Phillip Riccio (Army), son of Phyllis Riccio -serving stateside

Brian Schneider (Army) – serving in Afghanistan

Daniel Urband (USAF), grandson of Alice Urband—serving stateside

Mark Wilson (Army Spcl Forces/Reserves), husband of Andrea—serving stateside

Braden Stormer – serving stateside

***MERRY CHRISTMAS AND COME SAFELY HOME!***

