



*estgate*  
*itness*

December 2022

2235 Harrisburg Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
717-394-1071



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**December 1 ABW Christmas Celebration**

**December 4 All Church Christmas Dinner**

**December 20 AB Men's Breakfast**

**December 24 Candlelight Service**

**December 25 Christmas Day worship**



### Happy Birthday Jesus Celebration !

December 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

All Ladies of the church are invited to attend this Christmas gathering and time of fellowship. There will be light refreshments and cake. Bring in a Toys for Tots gift (infant to 12 years.)

We will collect and donate..

### All Church Christmas Dinner Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>

Please come and enjoy great food and fellowship after church on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>. We will be hosting a Christmas dinner in the fellowship hall. Help needed with side dishes and deserts.

# Greetings in the Name of our LORD !

## Hopeful People

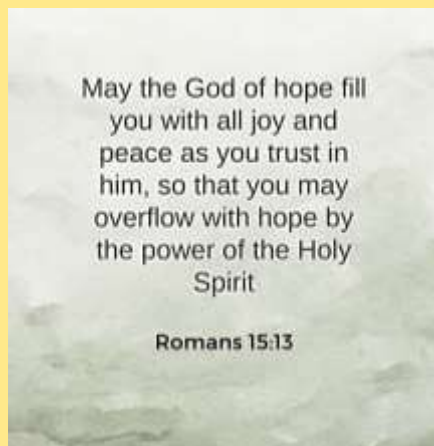
On this past Sunday we began to light the Advent Candles. Our first was the Candle of Hope. As the reading and prayer took place my mind wandered onto the theme of hope. Hope is an often evasive concept. Is there more hope or more hopelessness resonating in the hearts of most people? I believe at my core, that because we are made in God's image, we are hardwired for hope. You and I are always putting our hope in something. If you listen, you will realize that we communicate with the language of hope all the time.

"I sure hope it doesn't rain today."  
"I hope she isn't mad at me."  
"I hope I can do what I promised."  
"I hope they win the World Series."  
"I hope they can get along for once."  
"I hope this sickness isn't something serious."  
"I hope when I get home, there will be something to eat."  
"I hope to make something worthwhile out of my life."  
"I hope what I've believed in proves to be true."  
"I hope my family and friends will be proud of me."



The language of hope is on our lips because we live in a world where hope seems temporary or is often dashed. Let's be honest we often wonder what is the next shoe to drop. In our personal lives, our families, and in society at large, we deal with so much broken hope. It is not unusual for the thing in which we willingly placed our hope to fail us. In fact, we get to the place where we might even be afraid to feel hope. Yet we can't stop hoping because God created our lives to be propelled and directed by hope.

He meant our capacity for hope to drive us to him.



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

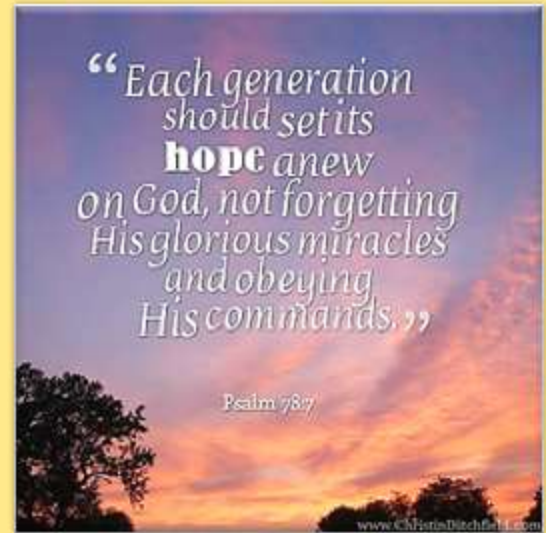
Romans 15:13

I believe the Christmas story, at its essence and core, reminds us that hope will never be found if we look purely on the horizontal. True hope must have a vertical focus. It is not enough to say that God gives hope. What the Christmas story declares is that God is hope. That hope is attached to glorious aspects of his character. He is Holy, Just, Righteous, Sovereign, Loving, Wise, Forgiving, Immutable, Pure, Truthful...The more we dwell upon and explore these aspects of His character, the more engulfed in vertical awe we become. This vertical focus begins deliberately and mentally. Our minds are thought factories and we can make choices

about what our thoughts and contemplations produce. Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:8 *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever*

*things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*

This is more than a silver-lining attitude, more than seeing the cup as half full rather than half empty. This is an admission that unseen and favorable forces populate the affairs of humanity. When we develop a Bible based vertical focus we realize our hope is grounded in the very person and work of God. We start to see with faith more than flesh, and since faith begets hope, we become more hope-filled. For we know that there is much more to life than meets the eye—we realize yet again that our Creator is ultimately sovereign and in complete control of the sphere of human history—and our own individual lives. We embrace that He will bring things to fullness in His plan and in His time. We embrace the truth that *“He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* Philippians 1:6. These words make me very, very, hopeful indeed!



He told me to tell you!

*Faithfully,*  
*Pastor Robert Zimmerman*



## Christmas Laughter

This is the melody of Christmas!  
Wide-eyed, sleigh bell giggles of tiny ones  
experiencing bright surprises;  
Whisper laughter of parents  
exchanging their knowing glances;  
Tear rimmed chuckles of reminiscence,  
Freshets of family get-together laughter,  
ties that bind laughter of the church family,  
Joy in heaven laughter of a great company of angels  
watching the first shepherd visitors  
making their way to a manger.

Dr. John Walker





## ABW Ministries

**Our next ABW meeting is  
Thursday, December 1, 1:00 pm  
in the Fellowship Hall.**

**We will be celebrating the birth of Jesus.**

We are participating in the Regional ABW project. The program, "Fresh Start in Costa Rica," is also affiliated with ABC International Ministries and missionary Sue Hegarty. See the posted flyers for more information.

We have made stuffed animals for local use, and the Luo Pads for rural Africa. Financial contributions to Blessings of Hope in Ephrata and Elizabethtown Nursing Home have been sent.

We are looking forward to a very active and satisfying winter and hope that you may join us for one, or all of the projects. If you have questions about ABW, or our projects, please see Pat Rust.

God Bless & Praise the Lord, Pat Rust and the ABW Ladies

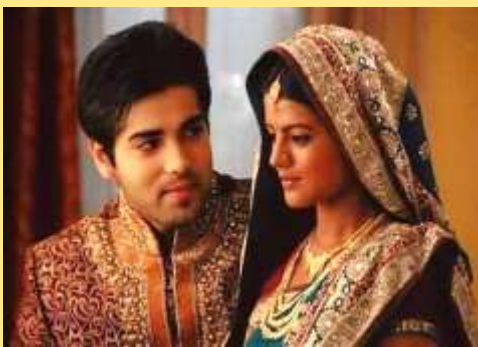
### **Women's Bible Study**

Ladies!

Come join our Women's Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at

9:30 AM. "Fulfilling the Purpose God Has For You!" Using a wonderful study by Max Lucado called "You Were Made For This Moment," we'll look at the life of Esther. We'll talk about opening our hearts to the purpose God has for each of us individually. During our cozy study we fellowship together, discuss God's Word and pray. We sing songs and have fun activities that enhance the lessons!

We start with fellowship and conversation at 9:30 am then go into our study at 9:45am. Come join us!



### **AB Men's Breakfast**

Our next Men's Fellowship Breakfast will be on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. We will meet at the **Family Fare Restaurant**, 5921 Main St., East Petersburg, PA 17520 for a casual Christian Men's fellowship time.





Westgate's American Baptist Women will be supporting Water Street Rescue Mission during its holiday food drive. In the past, the congregation has generously contributed large cans of fruits and vegetables and monetary gifts to this drive.

All of us realize the cost of food has sky-rocketed over the past year. ABW wants to ask you to donate only monetary gifts this year because the Mission can purchase foods less costly than we can. They can also buy the foods most needed. The Mission provides meals to the homeless and also distributes bags of groceries to those in need.

They can provide a meal (holiday meals included) for a mere \$2.96. For anyone contributing \$20.72 that amount will feed 7 people. That's incredible! The gift you give provides not only nourishing food but also hope and healing through the Mission's Whole Person approach to restoration that transforms lives all year long.

Your monetary gifts will be collected on Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>. Please use the envelope provided in the bulletin. If giving a check, make it out to Westgate and write WSRM in the bottom left corner. Please give what you can to this very worthy cause.

Thanks to all for your generous support of the Angel Tree Project!

## Sunday School Studies

**We continue to explore history in the Holy Land in our Adult Sunday School Class.**

We gather at 9:30 a.m. for coffee. Class begins by 9:45. After Pastor Robert leads in some opening moments of discussion or worship, then we go deeper into our topic for the week as led by Stephen Appleby. Most recently Stephen has been exploring archaeological or historical themes related to Christmas. Each weeks study is a standalone topic not tied to an ongoing curriculum.



# Birthdays & Anniversaries for Decemberber

## Birthdays



12/1	Leroy Tebie
12/4	Snow Bell
12/8	Cora Stump
	Diana Rushemeza
12/13	Christian Saw
12/19	Sharon Amey (Brooks)
12/20	Gloria Austin
12/21	Joseph Rushemeza
12/24	K'lu Moo
12/29	Ivy Sweigart
12/30	Marianne Edgell



## Anniversaries



12/15/1967	Blaine & Carol Proper
12/19/1970	Bill & Ruth Hannum
12/30/1961	Duke & Carol Gabriel



## Treasurer's Report

	10/30 – 11/27
Budget Income	\$22,534.00
Non-budget income	\$1,731.16



## INVITATIONS TO LOCAL EVENTS



*Discover Your Spiritual Gift! Baptist History & Polity - Rev. Randy Powell*

*Starting Friday January 6th & 7th 6:00-10:00 pm and Friday January 20 & 21st 2023 8:00 am-4:00pm (Intense Course).*

This on-line course explores the origins, development and basic beliefs of Baptists, emphasizing an appreciation for the importance of knowing our rich Baptist heritage. There will be an examination of the association, regional and national structures of ABC-USA and of the typical organization styles and policies of the local church. As opportunity presents itself, concepts of congregational transformation and spiritual formation will be incorporated in the course. Go to the website for more information: [actsministryschool.com](https://actsministryschool.com)





## Baptist Potpourri

***Our Operation Christmas Shoebox Offering:  
We dropped off 66 filled shoeboxes from  
Westgate. Pastor Cook's brother's church  
delivered 41; so Pastor Cook won a dinner as  
well. Way to go Westgate for your generosity  
and bringing joy to children at Christmas!***

### Our Missionaries

Dear Loved Ones,

Greeting. We are writing this journal with mixed emotions. Mixed emotions because news from our beloved Island is not at all encouraging.

(In Haiti) there is no gas, even on black market. Thus, there is no public transportation. This past Monday, one of our staff, Miss Nadage, has to walk from the eye clinic in Cap-Haitien on foot to her house in Morne Rouge- walking about 10 Km. Our dynamic chauffeur was lucky to buy 350 gallons of diesel for about \$2,217.00. This gas helps us to turn on the generator and to fill up the van for the mobile clinic in the villages.

Because of the shortage of gas, there is no service of whatever nature and nothing is open. Everything, especially food, has gone way up and many of our poor people are suffering. In spite of the harsh conditions, the staff of the eye clinic risk their lives to be of help to their fellow patients. They are there daily. Last month, they consulted 721 patients, 330 lab tests were realized. Please let us be praying for a peaceful solution for our country, Haiti.

Yours, Nzunga & Kihomi

THE  
Christian Citizen  
weekly

### *“Going outside”*

November 16, 2022

Rev. Donald Ng

For as long as anyone can remember, receptions took place on the sidewalk. Before the church building was renovated in 1998, the vestibule or lobby was so tiny that it was really only an entryway. After the Service of Baptism, a Sidewalk Tea consisting of a sheet cake and of course, tea would be served on the sidewalk to welcome new members. In fact, a church cookbook created to celebrate the church's 125th anniversary in 2005 was named “Sidewalk Tea.” Whether the church members are inside or outside on the sidewalk, the sidewalk is an extension of who we are as the church.

Photo: Donald Ng

San Francisco Chinatown is one of the most popular tourist places in the world. Tourists from all over the world come to visit the largest Chinese community outside of China for dim sum, souvenirs, and often a sweatshirt because unlike LA, the Bay Area is often cooler when the fog comes in. After a weekend of visitors, there are usually remnants from people littering the sidewalk and curbs. To welcome people to worship, I began to sweep the



sidewalk every Sunday morning. I sweep up cigarette butts, food wrappers, needles, and human excrement.

Ministering in the inner city is often a contrast between well-heeled members and those with great needs. We can feel threatened by strangers and people who are different from us. We can feel embattled from the outside and try to protect ourselves on the inside. One evidence of this is that our church's stained-glass windows were caged from the outside to prevent any vandalism. The consequence is that during Eastertide when the sun is positioned to shine through our windows into the sanctuary, the wired cage is visible that sadly suggests that Christ is still in the tomb! As people of the Resurrection, we are called to go outside.

As people of the Resurrection, we are called to go outside. Most of the accounts of Jesus' teachings and healings took place outside rather than inside. When Chinatown created a tourist walk around the neighborhood, the church donated for three bronze medallions that are now embedded into the sidewalk in front of the church. They celebrate the church's 125th anniversary in Chinese and in English. New custom-designed outside lights are on the wall of the church to light up our sidewalk for everyone to feel welcomed and safe, especially at night. The caged screens covering the stained-glass windows were removed when the building completed its earthquake retrofit. And a restored Head of Christ stained glass is illuminated 24 hours where it shines through our clear-glass front doors to serve as a blessing and hope in the world. When the church's people may not be there, the church building continues to embrace the world on behalf of a loving God.

One night when I came down to the church for a meeting, I saw a group of youth and a young man with a knife chopping on the trunk of one of the three trees in front of the church. I told him to stop, and he questioned what authority I had. I told him I was the pastor. I asked who the group leader was. When no one answered, I said to the young man with a girl by his side that he was the leader. He was. I told him that if we lost this tree, there would be no shade for them to hang out. I told them that if they set fire to the church, there would be no sidewalk corner to hang out. Then I told the leader that when the church people are not here, I need him to watch out for the church building like it was his own. I asked him to come to the front door where my name and cell number were listed. I told him to call me if anything were to happen and that if anything were to happen to him, I would come to help him out. Even if young people are not coming inside the church, they are on the sidewalk in front of the church where God is.

Today, the caged screens are off the stained-glass windows, sidewalk teas continue to be served, a church leader has stepped-up to be the new sidewalk sweeper, and literally and symbolically, after the Benediction, the people of the Resurrection are still going outside.

*Rev. Donald Ng was president, American Baptist Churches, USA, 2014-15, the first Asian American to serve in this elected position. For 17 years, he was senior pastor of the historic First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco. He retired from full-time ministry in 2015.*







## KNOW BEFORE WHOM YOU STAND

(excerpt from a 2012 article)

Jason Miller, Rabbi

*And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."* Exodus

*Da Lifnei Mi Atah Omed*, "Know Before Whom You Stand," These words are displayed over the ark containing the Torah scrolls in many synagogues: Thousands of Jewish people see this reminder in front of them while sitting in synagogue, the phrase reminds us to be mindful that we stand before God to worship. I thought of these words yesterday while reading an article about a true story that demonstrates just how anonymous the Supreme Court Justices are. "One day, Justice Stevens was walking outside the courthouse when tourists stopped him. They wanted to know if he would mind moving out of the way so they could take a good photograph of the Supreme Court building. These tourists had no idea that they could have enjoyed the memorable experience of meeting one of the nine justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, but instead they were left with a photograph of a building in which this justice sits and makes history while ruling on the most important legal cases of our time. Too often we don't take the time to recognize the important people in front of us and what they might have to offer.

Another true story that shows how easy it is to ignore the wonder right in front of our noses: On a cold January morning in 2007, a man stood at a Metro station in Washington, D.C. and started to play the violin. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them commuting to work. The individual who paid the most attention was a 3-year-old boy, but his mother hurried him along. In all he collected \$32, but no one really stopped to enjoy his music. When he finished, no one applauded. Turns out that this wasn't just any violinist playing on any violin. This wasn't a beggar looking to make some quick lunch money either. The violinist was Joshua Bell, who only days earlier had sold out at a Boston theatre where the average ticket was \$100. In the subway, Bell was playing one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth \$3.5 million. (Link to this video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0\\_YWhw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0_YWhw))

Why don't we recognize people's gifts when they are right in front of us? We have a reminder that we're standing before God when we pray in a synagogue, but perhaps it would be helpful to have this reminder when we stand before other human beings. In *Pirkei Avot*, Ben Zoma teaches, "Who is wise? He who learns from all people." We can all learn from those around us, and oftentimes we are forced to think in new and different ways when we keep an open mind to those who think differently than us. While the teacher in front of you may not look like you or dress like you, I encourage you to remember *before whom you stand*. It is a child of God who, in the words of the sage Ben Zoma, may make you wise. It is so important that we are all open to learning from others. We just never know when that human being in front of us will be a Supreme Court justice, a world-renown musician, or a great teacher who will forever change our life.

# Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

*Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.*



## WORD BANK

Shepherds  
Child  
Nazareth  
Census  
Baby  
David  
Mary  
Travel  
Town  
Register  
Born  
Night

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

"Today in the town of David a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV