

# THE NEWSLETTER

*A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania*

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## **ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

Friday, December 1

### **CAROLING AT HIBERNIA MANSION**

You are invited to join us as we carol at Hibernia Mansion for those who will be attending the Mansion tour. We sing from approximately 6-9pm. Remember to dress warmly.

Saturday, December 2

### **DECORATING THE "HOUSE"**

Dr J is looking for folks who will help prepare the church for Advent & Christmas by decorating the "house." If you would like to help, the decorating will begin at 8:30am on Saturday, December 2. Come and help.

Sunday, December 3

### **CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

You are invited to come to Cornerstone's annual Christmas Program. This year we will again share in the JOY of the Christmas season through this service of word and song. You won't want to miss this highlight of the Advent/Christmas season.

MARK THE DATE – Sunday, December 3, at 4pm.

SO – please invite your friends, family and neighbors to join you for this special Christmas program. Following the program will be a time of refreshment and fellowship. Come one, come ALL! FREE tickets are available for you to use in inviting your friends!

Monday, December 4

### **SWAG NIGHT**

Ladies & Men -- are you looking forward to SWAG night? The date is Monday, December 4. Come to the church at 6:30pm to create your own holiday swag, Bring your greens, ribbons, decorations, etc., (there will also be some supplies available to share) and enjoy this evening of fellowship and creation. We had a GREAT time last year. Plan on coming this year. It's OK to bring a friend. Sign up NOW so we have an idea of how many to set up for. Aunt Dian has sent bows for you to use on your holiday creations.

Wednesday, December 13

### **PUNK ROCK CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Come to the church at 7pm for a **GREAT TIME** of worshipping and caroling. **EVERYONE SHOULD COME!!!!** (Please bring an appetizer or a dessert to share.) Bring your **FRIENDS!**

Friday-Saturday, December 15-16

### **A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS**

Friday, December 15, at 6pm. Children in grades K through 5 are invited to spend *A Night Under the Stars* (a lock-in at the church), culminating the next morning at Breakfast with the Wise Men. Register by December 13.

Saturday, December 16

### **BREAKFAST WITH THE WISE MEN**

Children up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to come to the church to enjoy breakfast with our special guests, **Balthazar, Gaspar and Melchior**. Bring your **FRIENDS** - that includes Mom & Dad. The time is 9am!

Sunday, December 24

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

REGULAR SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES AT 8:15 & 10:45am, with Bible classes for all ages at 9:30am

### **A FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

Bring the whole family at 4pm as the children of Cornerstone present a Christmas Pageant depicting the message of the birth of the Savior of the world.

### **CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION**

Come to the church at 11pm as we gather around the Lord's Table for a service of candles, carols and readings from scripture as we welcome in the day of our Lord's birth. This very special service is also an opportunity for you to invite family and friends to join you!

**THIS IS THE VERY BEST WAY TO BEGIN YOUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!**

**READINGS FOR ADVENT**

To prepare your heart and life this Advent, try adding these daily readings to your regular Bible readings:

**LET THERE BE LIGHT**

**FIRST WEEK – LOOK TO THE HEAVENS**

- Creation's First Word - Genesis 1:1-5
- God Lights Up the Sky - Genesis 1:14-19
- Signs in Sun and Moon - Luke 21:25-28
- God's Promise to Abraham - Genesis 15:1-6
- A Star Shall Rise Out of Jacob - Numbers 24:15-19
- The Wise Men's Journey Begins - Matthew 2:1-2
- The Son of Man Coming with the Clouds - Matthew 24:29-31

**SECOND WEEK – LOOK TO THE WORD**

- God's Word Is a Lamp - Psalm 119:103-105
- A Virgin Shall Conceive - Isaiah 7:10-14
- To Us a Child is Born, a Son Is Given - Isaiah 9:2-7
- Behold, Your King Is Coming - Zechariah 9:9-10
- Light Shines from Little Bethlehem - Micah 5:2-5a
- A Light Shining in a Dark Place - 2 Peter 1:16-21
- Time to Wake from Sleep - Romans 13:11-14

**THIRD WEEK – LOOK TO THE ANGELS**

- Are They Not All Ministering Spirits? - Hebrews 1:5-14
- Gabriel Appears to Zechariah - Luke 1:5-17
- The Annunciation to Mary - Luke 1:26-33
- Joseph's Angelic Dream - Matthew 1:18-25
- Zechariah Foresees the Dawning Light - Luke 1:67-79
- The Glory of the Lord Shone - Luke 2:8-12
- A Multitude of the Heavenly Host - Luke 2:13-14

**FOURTH WEEK – LOOK TO THE LORD**

- And it came to pass...* – Luke 2:1-7
- Shepherds See and Share the Light - Luke 2:15-20
- Simeon Proclaims the Light - Luke 2:25-32
- Born of a Woman, to Redeem - Galatians 4:4-7
- The Light Shines in the Darkness - John 1:1-13
- We Beheld His Glory - John 1:14-18
- The Light Has Shone in Our Hearts - 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

**FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW**

One white and wintry Christmas Eve  
 in a village, long ago,  
 A young child took a journey,  
 leaving footprints in the snow.  
 Clutched within her tiny hand  
 she carried a small tattered heart,  
 Fashioned from some scraps of cloth,  
 wrapped in the charm of childlike art.

A manger scene of wood and straw  
 was the child's destination.  
 Her only Christmas wish,  
 to join Christ's birthday celebration.  
 She placed her precious handmade gift  
 upon the straw with care,  
 And before she turned to leave,  
 whispered a simple prayer.

The villagers who stood nearby  
 recall that night with awe,  
 Retelling every detail  
 of the miracle they saw...  
 A second set of footprints  
 appeared next to the girl's own.  
 They seemed to walk right by her side,

to see her safely home.

But there's no mystery in the presence  
 of this unseen Friend –  
 For once God's touched your heart,  
 you'll never walk alone again.

**CHRISTMAS is...**

love tugging men back to God with the powerful clasp of  
 a tiny hand reaching out from a bed of straw.

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

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

After all the words in the list are found in the puzzle, the unused letters will spell out an appropriate phrase.

- |                   |                  |                   |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ANGELS            | GOLD             | MYRRH             |
| ANNA              | GOOD TIDINGS     | PEACE             |
| BETHLEHEM         | GOOD WILL        | SAVIOUR           |
| CAESAR AUGUSTUS   | HEROD            | SHEPHERDS         |
| DREAMS            | HOUSE OF DAVID   | SIMEON            |
| EGYPT             | JESUS            | STAR              |
| EMMANUEL          | JOSEPH           | SWADDLING CLOTHES |
| FIRSTBORN SON     | JUDEA            | TAXING            |
| FRANKINCENSE      | KING of the JEWS | THE INN           |
| GABRIEL           | MANGER           | VIRGIN            |
| GLORY of the LORD | MARY             | WISE MEN          |

**THE ABCs OF ADVENT**

Advent means coming or arrival. During these four weeks before Christmas we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the unexpected King. He was not born in a palace but in the little town of Bethlehem. Perhaps only a few people knew of his birth, until angels announced the unexpected event to some startled shepherds! This King did not wear a golden crown, but a crown of thorns when he died on the cross for you. And then – in a joyfully unexpected event – he rose from the dead! Eternal life is yours through faith in his name. During this busy Advent season, as you shop and cook and wrap gifts, remember that Jesus your

King is coming again on a day you do not expect. By God's grace through faith in Jesus' name, you can be ready to welcome him. Your King is coming! Expect him!! The Church provides us with the season of Advent, a time that calls us to get back to the basics and focus our attention on the ABCs of Advent – anticipation, blessing, and candlelight. Dwelling on the ABCs of Advent again this year is a perfect way for us to learn more about ourselves and our God and his plan of salvation in Jesus

**Let the wise listen and add to their learning. –Proverbs 1:5**

#### ANTICIPATION

In our instant-gratification world, we want everything to happen right now. But Advent teaches us that sometimes we need to wait for the good things to happen in our lives. God's timing is always better than our own, and just as God sent Jesus to save us "in the fullness of time," God's plan for our lives will come at just the right moment.

#### BLESSING

The Bible readings for Advent are full of blessing. Gabriel and Elizabeth both speak words of blessing to Mary, who was chosen by God to bear God's Son. And Mary herself blesses God for the gift of Jesus in her song, the Magnificat. We learn from these role models how to encourage and support people in their callings this Advent and to continue to bless the Lord in prayer for all the magnificent things he has done in our lives.

#### CANDLELIGHT

We mark the four weeks of Advent by lighting a new candle on the Advent wreath each week. Candlelight also is a reminder to us that Jesus is the Light of the world, the Light no darkness can overcome. Taking time to light a candle each day of Advent is a simple way to bring the Good News to light that Jesus is coming to overcome the dark powers of sin and death forever.

#### AWAIT with purpose

**Blessed are all who wait for him - Isaiah 30:18**

Counting down the days until Christmas, standing in long lines at the mall or grocery store, getting stuck in traffic on the way to Grandma's house – waiting is an inevitable part of the Advent season. So why not use this "waiting" time to focus on Jesus and serve others as he would? Look up a Bible verse each day of Advent that reminds you who it is we are waiting for.

#### BE a blessing

**Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the child you will bear. Luke 1:42**

Advent is a very personal season, with God blessing individual people, like Mary and Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth, to help carry out his plan of salvation in Jesus. With that in mind, make your prayer time very personal this Advent. Pray for individual people by name and ask for God's help and guidance in issues that are close to your own heart and perhaps known only to you. As much as possible, find gifts for friends and family members that cater to their interests and abilities and consider making gifts yourself that are designed specifically for a certain person.

#### CAST your light

**You are the light of the world - Matthew 5:14**

While the candles we light in Advent are, first and foremost, symbols of the Light of Christ, they also represent the fact that we are little lights of Christ in this world. Think about ways in which you can brighten someone's day this Advent by paying them a visit or sending them a special card. What can you do to spark someone's desire to get to know Jesus more? In words and deed this Advent, give God the glory for the good things in

your life and let the light of his glory shine forth from you in the way you deal with difficulties with faith, hope and trust in God's will. When people see the Light of Christ at work in you, they, too, will want to live in the Light.

#### BECAUSE OF LOVE

A brother and sister had made their usual hurried, obligatory pre-Christmas visit to the little farm where dwelt their elderly parents with their small herd of horses. The farm was where they had grown up and had been named Lone Pine Farm because of the huge pine which topped the hill behind the farm. Through the years the tree had become a talisman to the old man and his wife, and a landmark in the countryside. The young siblings had fond memories of their childhood here, but the city hustle and bustle added more excitement to their lives, and called them away to a different life.

The old folks no longer showed their horses, for the years had taken their toll, and getting out to the barn on those frosty mornings was getting harder, but it gave them a reason to get up in the mornings and a reason to live. They sold a few foals each year, and the horses were their reason for joy in the morning and contentment at day's end.

Angry, as they prepared to leave, the young couple confronted the old folks "Why do you not at least dispose of The Old One. She is no longer of use to you. It's been years since you've had foals from her. You should cut corners and save so you can have more for yourselves. How can this old worn out horse bring you anything but expense and work? Why do you keep her anyway?"

The old man looked down at his worn boots, holes in the toes, scuffed at the barn floor and replied, "Yes, I could use a pair of new boots. His arm slid defensively about the Old One's neck as he drew her near with gentle caressing he rubbed her softly behind her ears. He replied softly, "We keep her because of love. Nothing else, just love."

Baffled and irritated, the young folks wished the old man and his wife a Merry Christmas and headed back toward the city as darkness stole through the valley. The old couple shook their heads in sorrow that it had not been a happy visit. A tear fell upon their cheeks. How is it that these young folks do not understand the peace of the love that filled their hearts?

So it was, that because of the unhappy leave-taking, no one noticed the insulation smoldering on the frayed wires in the old barn. None saw the first spark fall. None but the "Old One."

In a matter of minutes, the whole barn was ablaze and the hungry flames were licking at the loft full of hay. With a cry of horror and despair, the old man shouted to his wife to call for help as he raced to the barn to save their beloved horses. But the flames were roaring now, and the blazing heat drove him back. He sank sobbing to the ground, helpless before the fire's fury. His wife, back from calling for help, cradled him in her arms, clinging to each other, they wept at their loss.

By the time the fire department arrived, only smoking, glowing ruins were left, and the old man and his wife, exhausted from their grief, huddled together before the barn. They were speechless as they rose from the cold snow covered ground. They nodded thanks to the firemen as there was nothing anyone could do now. The old man turned to his wife, resting her white head upon his shoulder as his shaking old hands clumsily dried her tears with a frayed red bandana. Brokenly he whispered, "We have lost much, but God has spared our home on this eve of

Christmas. Let us gather strength and climb the hill to the old pine where we have sought comfort in times of despair. We will look down upon our home and give thanks to God that it has been spared and pray for our beloved most precious gifts that have been taken from us.

And so, he took her by the hand and slowly helped her up the snowy hill as he brushed aside his own tears with the back of his old and withered hand.

The journey up the hill was hard for their old bodies in the steep snow. As they stepped over the little knoll at the crest of the hill, they paused to rest, looking up to the top of the hill the old couple gasped and fell to their knees in amazement at the incredible beauty before them.

Seemingly, every glorious, brilliant star in the heavens was caught up in the glittering, snow-frosted branches of their beloved pine, and it was aglow with heavenly candles. And poised on its top most bough, a crystal crescent moon glistened like spun glass. Never had a mere mortal created a Christmas tree such as this. They were breathless as the old man held his wife tighter in his arms.

Suddenly, the old man gave a cry of wonder and incredible joy. Amazed and mystified, he took his wife by the hand and pulled her forward. There, beneath the tree, in resplendent glory, a mist hovering over and glowing in the darkness was their Christmas gift. Shadows glistening in the night light.

Bedded down about the "Old One" close to the trunk of the tree, was the entire herd, safe.

At the first hint of smoke, she had pushed the door ajar with her muzzle and had led the horses through it. Slowly and with great dignity, never looking back, she had led them up the hill, stepping cautiously through the snow. The foals were frightened and dashed about. The skittish yearlings looked back at the crackling, hungry flames, and tucked their tails under them as they licked their lips and hopped like rabbits. The mares that were in foal with a new years crop of babies, pressed uneasily against the "Old One" as she moved calmly up the hill and to safety beneath the pine. And now, she lay among them and gazed at the faces of the old man and his wife. Those she loved she had not disappointed. Her body was brittle with years, tired from the climb, but the golden eyes were filled with devotion as she offered her gift –

Because of love. Only because of love.  
Tears flowed as the old couple shouted their praise and joy... and again the peace of love filled their hearts.

### HE LIVES WITHIN YOU

The virgin birth is more, much more, than a Christmas story; it is a picture of how close Christ will come to you.

The first stop on His itinerary was a womb. Where will God go to touch the world? Look deep within Mary for an answer.

Better still, deep within yourself.

What He did with Mary, He offers to us! He issues a Mary-level invitation to all His children.

"If you let Me, I'll move in!"

Proliferating throughout the Scriptures is a preposition that

leaves no doubt: the preposition "in."

Jesus lives in His children.

John was clear, "*Those who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them*" (1 John 3:24).

Christ grew in Mary until He had to come out.

Christ will grow in you until the same occurs. He will come out in your speech, in your actions, in your decisions.

Every place you live will be a Bethlehem, and every day you live will be a Christmas. You, like Mary, will deliver Christ into the world.

God in us! Have we sounded the depth of this promise?

God was with Adam and Eve. God was with Abraham. God was with Moses and the children of Israel. God was with the apostles.

But He is in you.

You are a modern-day Mary. Even more so. He was a fetus in her, but He is a force in you. He will do what you cannot.

Can't stop drinking? Christ can. And He lives within you.

Can't stop worrying? Christ can. And He lives within you.

Can't forgive, forget the past, or forsake your bad habits? Christ can! And He lives within you.

### READ YOUR BIBLE

*One more month and you will have read the Bible through in one year. Keep going. The Lord has more blessing to pour out on us as we are faithful in this small area.*

The month of **December**

1. Galatians 4-6, Psalm 120
2. Ephesians 1-3, Psalm 121
3. Ephesians 4-6, Psalm 122
4. Philippians 1-4, Psalm 123
5. Colossians 1-4, Psalm 124
6. 1 Thessalonians 1-5, Psalm 125
7. 2 Thessalonians 1-3, Psalm 126
8. 1 Timothy 1-3, Psalm 127
9. 1 Timothy 4-6, Psalm 128
10. 2 Timothy 1-4, Psalm 129
11. Titus 1-3, Psalm 130
12. Philemon, Psalm 131
13. Hebrews 1-4, Psalm 132
14. Hebrews 5-7, Psalm 133
15. Hebrews 8-10, Psalm 134
16. Hebrews 11-13, Psalm 135
17. James 1-5, Psalm 136
18. 1 Peter 1-5, Psalm 137
19. 2 Peter 1-3, Psalm 138
20. 1 John 1-5, Psalm 139
21. 2 John, Psalm 140
22. 3 John, Psalm 141
23. Jude, Psalm 142
24. Revelation 1-3, Psalm 143
25. Revelation 4-6, Psalm 144
26. Revelation 7-9, Psalm 145
27. Revelation 10-12, Psalm 146
28. Revelation 13-15, Psalm 147

29. Revelation 16-18, Psalm 148  
 30. Revelation 19-20, Psalm 149  
 31. Revelation 21-22, Psalm 150

### GOD WITH US

There is a beautiful but simple story that is told about a young child who busied herself one day at a table in the living room. Her mother approached her daughter who was engrossed in feverishly drawing a picture on paper with her crayons. "What are you drawing?" her mother asked. "Oh," said the child, "I'm drawing a picture of God." Her mother responded with all her adult wisdom which showed the poverty of her faith, "How can you draw a picture of God? No one has ever seen him nor do they know what he looks like." "That might be true," said her daughter, "but they'll know what he looks like when I finish with my drawing."

This is what the writer of the Gospel of Matthew is saying when he states that the birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah for "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us)." Thus we are able to know and to see what God is like because God has come to us in Jesus who is the Christ. No longer do we wonder or question what God is like. In the birth of Jesus the Christ we have a true revelation of what God is and of what God expects of each one of us.

"God with us" means first of all incarnation. Literally translated incarnation means "in flesh." The celebration of Christmas is the acknowledgment that God has come to us and all humanity in human form. No longer is God just an abstract philosophical concept or an idea of the mind. In Jesus, God has revealed himself in flesh and blood, living life the same way that each one of us does. He experienced joy and pain, hunger and thirst, acceptance and rejection, as well as life and then physical death. We know what God is like because he has made a unique entrance into the events of the world in human form. As Paul said, "God was in Christ." So at Christmas time we celebrate God's coming in human form, God in Christ – the incarnation.

Second, if Jesus is "God with us," then we are called upon to follow him. Our loyalty and obedience should be to him and to him alone. Our love of Jesus and therefore our love of God is because God has first loved us. If we are serious about loving God, then we must love what he loves without reservation or exception. His love is for all humanity and therefore our love must be the same – for all humanity. Likewise we are called upon to reject those things which God does not love. Selfishness, greed, anger and the like have no place in God's love. There is no greater love than that which God has for us. So at Christmas time we are reminded that his love is kept alive and viable by the love which human beings have for one another.

Third, if Jesus is "God with us," then we are called upon to be like him. All our thoughts, our words, our deeds and our attitudes should be Christlike. How much more pleasant

our lives would be. We would be able to eliminate so much that causes us anxiety and worry. We would be more pleasant people to be with, and our very presence would be a constant source of joy and hope to all around us. Christmas comes to remind us that God is there to help each one of us be this kind of person as we face life each day. We are not alone unless we choose to be alone. His presence is available to us at all times and in all places, always and in all ways. God provides for us the grace and the strength to fulfill the true image in which we were created. He expects us to be Christlike; for as Jesus was his child, so too each one of us are children of God.

Thus it is that we know in part what God is like. This Christmas there is extreme joy in our hearts for we know that God is with us and, as the ancient carol says,

*How silently, how silently,  
 The wondrous gift is given!  
 So God imparts to human hearts  
 The blessings of his heaven.  
 No ear may hear his coming,  
 But in this world of sin,  
 Where meek souls will receive him still  
 The dear Christ enters in.*

As you gather with family and friends this Christmas, may you experience "God with us" in new and renewed ways. May God bless you **always** and **in all ways!**

*The Elders & staff  
 Cornerstone Fellowship*

### PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

Preparation is a very necessary and important ingredient to success. In ancient times when a king set out to visit some part of his kingdom, he would dispatch men before him to prepare the way. These emissaries would engage in doing many things to help guarantee the success of the monarch's visit. They would see that the road would be repaired, smoothed and straightened. Obstacles would often be removed and the route would be made secure from bandits and robbers. Comfortable resting places would be found as well as ample fresh water made available. It is this image that the prophet Isaiah uses when he speaks to the Jewish exiles of Babylon. He assures them that the road back to their homeland, Judea, has been prepared for them by God. He tells them that their Lord, himself, would come and would lead them through the desert back to where they longed to return. This custom of preparation exists to this very day. Before the President of the United States goes on a trip to some part of the world, members of his staff go before him. They work out all accommodations, itinerary, agenda and attend to all details so that the way is made smooth.

John the Baptist was seeking to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. He was the forerunner of "the anointed one" who was to come and so he uses the words of Isaiah and says, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John knew that the Messiah would soon be coming and his time was at hand. He wanted the people to

be prepared; and so he uses Isaiah's words symbolically to make straight a highway in the desert, which means that they should make ready for the coming of God's Son, the King of Life.

These words of admonition from John the Baptist ring out to us today loudly and clearly as we busy ourselves with all of our Christmas preparations. You and I are symbolically being called to "prepare the way of the Lord." The preparation being sought from us is the readying of our hearts, minds and souls to welcome him into every aspect of our lives. The true preparation makes possible his rebirth in our daily existence for the Christ is coming. All too often Christmas comes and goes quickly and uneventfully. We spend most of our time in being prepared for the superficial celebration of his coming. Presents, decorated homes and trees, special foods and the like are not what Christmas is truly all about although these things have their meaning. Passing us by are his wonderful messages of love, peace on earth, hope, comfort and cheer. They are either lost or at best short-lived. Our experience of Christmas is all too often just a sentimental glow that seems an illusion rather than the true Christmas experience of the Advent of God into our lives.

What then can we do about it? How can we make this year different? How can we be truly and honestly prepared? What can we do that we haven't done before so that this Christmas we will be prepared and he won't be crowded out because we're too busy?

First, we must allow God's Spirit to transform these weeks of preparation. We can begin by promising to worship regularly each Sunday through the Advent season leading to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Moreover, we should strive to worship daily in our homes by allowing time for regular Bible study and prayer. Jesus encouraged his followers to pray regularly. Many of the obstacles that we find in our way to God can be and will be removed by prayer. Thus, by use of quietness, meditation and contemplation our hearts will be opened, the rough places of our lives will be made smooth and straight will be the way for the Lord to minister to our needs.

Second, we must change our attitudes about others. We must be the true reflection of the Christ so that everyone

whom we meet, with whom we deal and have contact will be able to catch a glimpse of his love because we are loving in both our words and deeds. This means that we must be involved in preaching sermons of acts not words. Our lives will be judged by the quality and quantity of the way we live with others and Christmas then becomes an experience 365 days a year. As Edgar Guest phrased it in *Sermons We See*:

*One good person teaches many, people believe what they behold;*

*One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.*

*Who stands with those of honor learns to hold their honor dear,*

*For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.*

*Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence I say,*

*I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.*

Third, we must be prepared to be concerned for humanity. All around us are people who have needs. Hunger, poverty, illness, lack of freedom, etc., are obstacles along their way and often prohibit their allowing Christ to enter their hearts. Our involvement in helping others may not save humanity but it does help those whom we reach to be more ready for God's coming into their lives. Sick, hungry, disillusioned and embittered people find it hard to hear about love when all they have ever experienced in life is hatred and deprivation.

It is up to you and me to seek to make plain and level the mountains of ignorance, bigotry and prejudice that create for others the valleys of depression, rejection and selfishness. By not only proclaiming but constantly living the basic truth that all people are important and that each person has worth and dignity, we help to make straight the highway. We must never rest until liberty, justice and equality are available to each human being and their minds and bodies are set free to develop to their highest potential.

Once again the cry goes out around the world, "The King of Glory is coming." "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Are we ready to be prepared or will we remain an impediment to ourselves and others?

**HAVE A BLESSED AND  
JOYOUS CHRISTMAS!**