

CENTRAL NEWS DECEMBER 2017

STOCKTON CENTRAL SDA CHURCH

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ASSORTED

Dear Church Family;

Thanksgiving Day 2017 has come and gone and I failed to wish you a happy one via the November issue of the Newsletter. It was not that I failed to do so, simply that I failed to put it in print. Those with whom I came in personal contact, I did so. So for those that I did not, please allow me to say, "I wish you a Happy, belated Thanksgiving Day/weekend!" It is my hope that regardless of your situation, you found something to be thankful for—not just that particular day, but every day. After all, if you are reading this short letter to you, you can and should be thankful that Our Heavenly Father woke you up that day and each day since; I am.

May God continue to bless you according to His Will. And may you continue to reach out to Him in prayer and supplication.

God Bless You,
Bobbie W. Berry-Sanford, Ed.D.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

The Christmas holidays are upon us, so to speak—and have been since before Halloween. Much can be discerned from that alone. However, may I make a suggestion or two? Take a different approach this year. If you have food to spare and it does not "cramp your style", invite a person to dinner who recently found him/her-self alone for whatever reason. Or you might make a dinner plate and deliver it to him/her. Yes, it takes time and energy, but the reward is great. And you will likely lift someone's spirit. Who knows, you might bring someone to Christ. After all, the Signs of the Time are all around us with a message that we are living in the time of the end.

The Real Meaning of Christmas Following are excerpts taken from Christian Relationships, published by the Family Life Service Department of the Northern California Conference of Seventh Day Adventists.

Making the most of the holidays

--especially if you're a single parent! Involve your children in special activities in which each one can be engage/contributes. (If you would like a list, please see Dr. Berry)

ANSWERED PRAYER

God is an awesome God!

I grew up as child in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. As a teenager, I was in and out of the church and a sometime problem child for my mother. She tried hard to engage me in positive activities: gymnastics, violin, and season tickets to the Stockton Symphony to which she took me. Eventually I married and started a family.

Several months ago, we lost our family pet, our dog Biscuit after 17 years. Still grieving over that loss, I lost my husband of 27 years. Then, I began to think I was losing my mind! Both losses were great. I was diagnosed with insecticides/pesticides psychosis. This was an awful experience! I felt that some form of flying insect was attacking my body and when they did, they turned into a worm form that imbedded themselves under my skin. I attempted to remove them with tweezers but they simply multiplied. No one believed me. Doctors medicated me, but the pests persisted. Only my mother stood by me; prayed for and with me. I pleaded for help, but there seemed to be no help. Eventually I moved in with my mom and stepdad. One day, I turned on my mother, I don't recall, but she said I took the stance of Satan and she became afraid, called on the name of Jesus and locked herself in her bedroom. The next day, on her morning walk, her friend from the Mid-Atlantic called her and she shared my story and her fears with him. He prayed with her. She came in the house with a new found confidence and had a long talk with me. I couldn't believe some things she said I'd done, yet I knew that of all people, I could believe her. She called her pastor; as a result, a small gathering of the pastor, few elders, and a few members of my mother's choosing, came together and prayed to The Father in the name of Jesus.

It was a beautiful cleansing time. The prayers were heard in heaven and Satan was sent packing! The insects/pest have vanished but have left visible scars. God heard and answered ours prayers and I am on the mend. I am thankful for my mother who continues to be supportive. I am thankful for her pastor, participating elders, and invited participating members.

-Anonymous

PASTOR'S CORNER

Small groups are a great way to connect with God and others. They help new people accept Christ and also help current believers grow. Acts 2:42 describes four necessary ingredients in a small group. These ingredients helped a rapidly growing church retain and disciple its new and ever growing membership.

Acts 2:42—"And they continued steadfastly in 1) the apostles' doctrine and 2) fellowship, in 3) the breaking of bread, and in 4) prayers." They connected with God through the apostles' doctrine (Bible study) and prayer. They connected with one another through fellowship and the breaking of bread (food: a regular meal and also the Lord's Supper/Communion). Said another way, they connected with God by having a spiritual conversation (prayer) over a spiritual meal (Bible study). They connected with one another by having a literal conversation (fellowship) over a literal meal (breaking of bread). Acts 2:44-45 also says they helped each other out in practical ways.

So what does a small group look like? You get together with a few people, eat and talk about everyday things, and also study something from the Bible and pray. In addition you help each other out in practical ways. This is so simple and so effective! This is the structure God established in the early church so thousands of new members could be adequately nurtured. We need small groups in our church so we can effectively nurture new people who will come from our radio and TV ministries. Will you please consider being part of a small group and possibly hosting one in your home? If so please tell the pastor.

If there is anything you deem important or of relevance to the congregation as a whole, in addition to answered prayer, (name for answered prayer may remain confidential/anonymous), please contact Dr. Bobbie Berry-Sanford at bobbiejwb@copper.net or at 209.451.1818.

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