

Friday, December 11, 2020

Dear Church Family,

Long email alert, but please read it carefully and thoroughly. It is very important that you read this information. Thank you!

Isaiah 9:2 (TLB)... “The people who walk in darkness shall see a great Light—a Light that will shine on all those who live in the land of the shadow of death.”

John 1:4, 5, 9 (TLB)... referring to Jesus, “Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it. Later on, the one who is the true Light arrived to shine on everyone coming into the world.”

If there were ever a time in our lives when we needed light to live by, it is now. 2020 has been a “dark journey” to navigate and continues to bring challenging obstacles our way. 2020 has been a “dark season” of disruption, changing the world as we once knew it into something that at times is unrecognizable to us. 2020 has been a “dark year” for so many who are grieving so many losses including saying “goodbye” to the ones they love. 2020 has been a “dark night of the soul”, testing our character and challenging our deepest convictions and core beliefs.

Here we are, on the “doorstep” of the Christmas season, facing more changes and interruptions to our beloved traditions; we feel lost, hurt, angry, confused, disillusioned, tired, depressed, ambivalent and numb... How can we experience the light when so much around us seems “dark”?

I would suggest to you that now is the greatest time to experience the light, for it is in the darkness when light shines the brightest and the clearest; it is in this time in our lives when the story of God coming into this world as the “light” will resonate in our hearts like it hasn’t in years.

It’s the story of God breaking into a world filled with darkness to be “with us” when we can’t be together. It’s the story of God surprising us with “good news” and inviting us into the narrative... the weak, the unqualified, the unprepared, the undeserving. It’s the story of God begging us to make more room in our hearts for the light and love of His mercy and grace; a story whose foundation is built on faith, hope and love. It’s a story retold for centuries, in good times and bad times, in times of peace and in times of war; a story that changes our lives every time we read and hear it.

We are living out this story. It is difficult and daunting, and some days, discouraging, yet it is our destiny. We have another opportunity to live out this story. We have a responsibility before us to walk in the light and share the light with others.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW... Beginning this Sunday, December 13, 2020, we are suspending all activities, worship service and in-person gatherings at the Church of God of Landisville and the Real Life Church of God. This will be effective from December 13 through January 3, 2021. The situation is fluid and can change at any moment. We are unable to safely gather for worship and for Christmas Eve services. This is our effort to keep our church families healthy and safe, and to communicate to our "neighbors" that we love them and are willing to do our part to stop the spread of this virus in our school district and county.

We can still be a witness to our friends and neighbors. Host a watch party on your Facebook page and invite them to watch with you online. Or, if you can do it safely with masks and physical distance guidelines in place, have them over on a Sunday to watch the service with you. Call someone; check in on them and pray with them over the phone. Watch the worship service at another time and volunteer on Sundays with an organization that needs willing people to serve; remember to do it safely. Let's be the congregation in our school district that serves in our community and tells the "good news" story of Jesus with our lives, safely of course!

We will finish our Advent sermon series online. We will also have our Christmas Eve celebration online. We will continue to worship and meet together online; you can log in to our Sunday morning gathering (10:00am), Wednesday night "prayer circle" (7:00pm) and upcoming videos from ShineKids on Facebook, our new [YouTube](#) channel and our website, www.landisville.church

This weekend... some things are still happening as scheduled!

Plan to attend our "drive through" living nativity presentation at the Church of God of Landisville on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 12 and 13 from 6-8pm. Invite your friends and neighbors to stop by and visit us.

Food give-away... notice the change in location!

Our next food giveaway is tomorrow, Dec. 12 in the church parking lot at The Real Life Church of God, 6030 Lemon St., East Petersburg, 11:00am till 12:30pm. Show up, drive in and we'll load the food in your car!

Next Weekend... Christmas gift box give-away is still happening!

YOU MUST SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THIS BOX. THE DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS SUNDAY, DEC. 13! See the attached flyer for details. Call the church office in Landisville, 717-898-8144 or email Candice, candice@landisville.church to sign up. Please check our website, www.landisville.church for details.

God's arrival always brings hope!
God's presence will bring you peace!
God's grace will joy!

Peace, Joy and Love to you, Pastor Tim