

*Merry Christmas from Rivers of Life Outreach Ministry*

# *Tributaries*

*December 2008*

*Christmas Edition*



## *Rivers of Life Outreach Ministries*

204 McCandless St.  
Arnold, PA 15068  
(724) 339-1135

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Pastor Marvin E. Hill  
& Sister Diana Hill

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Weekly Services  
Sunday Morning Service  
and Children's Church  
11:00 AM

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Community Youth Bible Study  
Tuesday 7:00 PM

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Bible Study & Prayer Meeting  
Wednesday 7:00 PM

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Radio Ministry  
"Living Waters"  
W.G.B.N. AM 1150  
Fridays 10:00 AM

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Transportation to weekly services  
available upon request

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[www.roloutreach.com](http://www.roloutreach.com)

## **WELCOME!**

The best way to celebrate the greatest gift to humankind is to gather and thank our loving Creator. We rejoice in your presence during this holiday season and throughout the coming new year!

*"The child to be born will be holy;  
He will be called Son of God."*

*Luke 1:35*





This is taken from our last Leadership Meeting in October. We have all been attacked, challenged, lost people in our lives & ministry; but also gained some. But through it all -

God has remained "faithful and true." We have gained more history with Him. The vision for Rivers of Life has not changed. (Please read why we exist as a ministry in the Vision Statement.) The ministry started out in a living room with seven people, moved to the New Kensington Community Room, then to Lazarus Tomb, to the Salvation Army, then to 4th Avenue and now to our present location. God is good! Each place we learned & grew even as our faith was attacked and challenged. We could have given up and disbanded many times - BUT! But we are here, waiting on God to order our next steps! For all who have "stuck with the staff," thank you!

What God has laid on my heart is to get back to the basics that made this ministry strong and effective. So in 2009 our emphasis will be on building the infrastructure of the ministry. In other words: "strengthen that which remaineth."

Some of the things we will be doing are:

1. Every 4th Wednesday of Bible Study we'll spend praying for those who need healing & deliverance.
2. We will have more fellowships at the church & homes to connect more with each other.
3. We will have Couples Fellowships to strengthen the foundation of our families & future families.

These are just a few areas that our energy will be directed toward. I am asking all leaders and staff of every department of the ministry to direct your attention to building the infrastructure of the ministry. The question to ask is: What do I need long-term to fulfill the vision even after I am gone? Once we have answered that question, then together, hand in hand, we must "press toward the prize of the high calling of Jesus Christ."

What an exciting year this will be!

**The foundation of our church was  
based on this scripture:**

*"And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth, wherever the River shall come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come there; for they shall be healed; And everything shall live where the River cometh." (Ez. 47:9).*

**This is God's promise to us for you!**

## ***Rivers of Life Outreach Ministry***

***Pastor Marvin E. &  
Sister Diana Hill***



### ***Vision Statement***

*We exist as a New Testament church where the Word and the Supernatural work hand in hand; where ministries are birthed to address the needs of the community, and a place where the Body of Christ (locally and collectively) can be edified and strengthened. We are a multi-cultural fellowship called to exemplify the true Body of Christ.*

### ***Mission Statement***

*We are called to EVANGELISM:*

*To reach people of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds;  
from every economic level, and from every facet of society.*

*We are called to*

### ***TEACHING/INSTRUCTION:***

*To provide guidance, knowledge and tools for the  
development of each person's gift and ability.*

*We are called to*

### ***SERVICE:***

*To provide an avenue for each individual within the Body to  
fulfill their ministry to the fullest extent, exercising their  
God-given gifts and abilities.*

*Our motto is*

***TAKE IT TO THE STREETS!!***

To discover more about our ministry, please join us  
at one of our services or visit our website at:

**[www.roloutreach.com](http://www.roloutreach.com)**



**Read on and enjoy our Christmas/  
New Year edition of the Trib!**



*"encouraging young people to Live Right"*



Hey Everyone,

Just want to give you an idea of what we've been talking about in youth group. The focus has been and will be the power of one decision. Our material comes from the life of David. I believe we see more of his life than any other person in scripture and it allows for a lot of lessons to be learned.

Practically anyone who knows anything about the Bible knows the story of David and Bathsheba. And as a consequence of David's sin with Bathsheba, their first born child died. But as I read the scripture for youth Sunday, I became totally engrossed in the long lasting implications of David's decision. It doesn't just end with the death of his baby. Total chaos erupts in his family and continues long after his death.

So what was the bad decision? Adultery with Bathsheba? Yes that's bad. Having Uriah, Bathsheba's husband killed? Well yes, that's not good. But look at the first words in 2 Samuel 11:1

*The following spring, the time of year when kings go to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to destroy the Ammonites. In the process they laid siege to the city of Rabbah. But David stayed behind in Jerusalem.*

The bad decision that led to a downward spiral in David's family life was such a simple one. He decided **not** to be where he should have been. (Pause and think about that). That's it. It was that small decision that opened the door to all the other poor decisions he made.

There are many times in life when we need direction. We don't know where to go or what to do. But there are other times when we know exactly what to do. We know exactly where to be. God has spoken very clearly in his word on the matter. And we decide to do what we want. OR We ask God to give us an answer on something that is clearly laid out in his word... we just don't like what his word says:

Should I go to church this morning?

Should I date this unsaved person?

Should I go out to the club with unsaved friends?

These are questions for which the answers are clearly in God's Word. That's why when we ask God, we hear nothing. He's already spoken. We don't like the answer.

Scripture doesn't tell us if David asked "Should I go to war this spring?" If he did, it's quite possible that heaven was silent on the matter. Because he knew it was where he was supposed to be!!!

When you have a chance read 2 Samuel 11 through the end of the book and see how many things can be tied back to David's decision to stay home. And as you're reading make it your prayer that God will give you the power to seek direction when you don't know what to do...and to be obedient in the things you do know to do.

**Sister Sherri**

**CHECK OUT THE LIVIN' RIGHT WEBSITE ~**  
**[www.livinright.org](http://www.livinright.org)**

Read the biographies of our youth pastor, Sister Sherri Lynn Johnson, and the rest of the Livin' Right Crew. Check out the tools to help you walk out your Christian life. The articles, videos & links to other websites can really help you LIVE RIGHT!



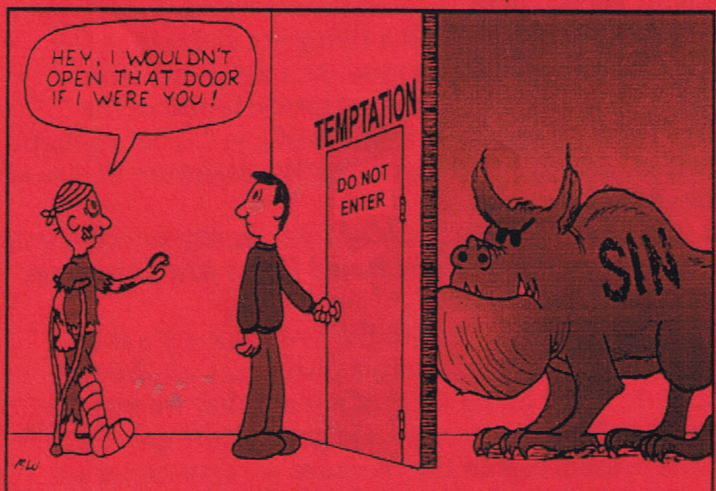
**RIVERS OF LIFE IS**  
**"TAKING IT TO... MYSPACE!"**

Visit our MySpace page & become our friend!!!

**[www.myspace.com/roloutreach](http://www.myspace.com/roloutreach)**

### DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.

- GENESIS 4:6-7 MSG



# Christmas Presence



It's that time of year again. The festivities are in full swing. The decorations, the gifts, the holiday treats; they all capture our attention. I love the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas. I enjoy seeing all the colorful decorations in the stores and driving around

looking at elaborate light displays. The Christmas carols playing on the radio add just the perfect touch. Nothing can rival the scent of our freshly cut pine tree, cookies baking in the oven, & the candles burning all around the house. I can say without question this is my favorite time of year.

In the past most of us have over-indulged in the holiday festivities, whether it's food or gifts, or wine & spirits. But for most Americans, this year will likely be much more conservative. Many of us have had a difficult year financially. With the price of gas doubling for a time and the cost of everything else on the rise, we don't have "extra" money for the holidays.

This Christmas my family has less money to spend in comparison to other years. I must admit, I've felt troubled by the fact that we can't buy for all of our family & friends as we'd like. Our children won't be opening as many gifts this Christmas morning. My husband & I agreed that we will exchange only small gifts with each other this year. The thought of not being able to give as many gifts made me sad. I take great pleasure in buying the gifts, then watching each person open the presents that were chosen especially for them.

As I thought & prayed about our circumstances, I considered the whole "holiday process." My mind went through so many different scenarios. I thought of how blessed we are to have our health, our strength, our families, our friends, our homes, our jobs, our church, and the list goes on. I also reflected on the people all around the world, even in our own country, who can't boast of any of those things. My heart breaks at the thought of a parent waking up Christmas morning without one gift to give to their child. Worse yet, without a hot meal to satisfy their hunger or a home to keep them warm & safe. And I realized that even at one of our most trying times financially, we are rich!

Admittedly, I still felt a twinge of sadness at the thought of disappointing anyone. As I sat there, God brought to my remembrance a scripture found in the Psalms, "In His presence is fullness of joy." That brought me comfort. So I decided to look up the scripture and read the rest of the text.

***Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11***

Wow! That's it. It's not the *presents* ~ it's the *presence*! Think about it. What is Christmas all about? God came to earth in the form of a man, that we may be reconciled to Him for eternity. He gave us the greatest gift of all; His presence! And the pleasure we experience on Christmas morning when we open up those beautifully wrapped, hand picked gifts is just a tiny little glimpse of the pleasure that God has planned for us.

It does bring me *fullness of joy* to know that God loves us so much that He sent his only Son to fulfill every need we could ever experience. Even when we are going through times of hardship, He is present. Maybe we don't have everything on our Christmas list. Maybe we have even experienced loss this year. But nothing that we have lost can diminish the gift that we have been given through the miracle of Christ's birth!

This Christmas I pray that we all experience the Gift of His Presence, Fullness of Joy and Pleasures Forevermore!  
Cami

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*



John 1:14

## Christmas is Proof

Christmas is a time to be happy! ... A time for celebrating and sharing. For God stoops down to be one of us, born as a poor baby so that we can be rich. He does not leave us to get along as best we can. He joins us where we are. God is committed to us. Christmas is proof that God cares. That is why we celebrate — and show our care in turn to those who need it. ~ F. Hebart

## My Morning Prayer

What guidance is God giving

For my living of this day?

Will I help someone who's needy?

Will I have kind words to say?

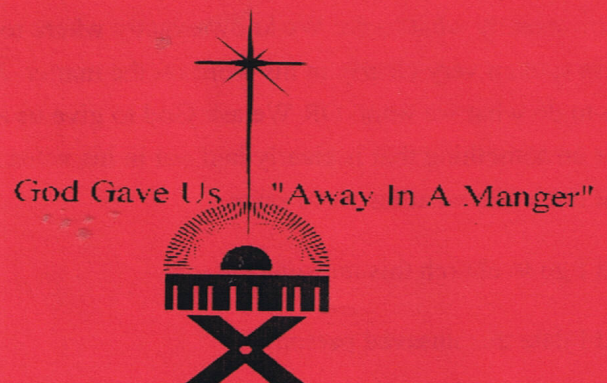
Will outrageous acts of kindness

Be the gifts that I can share?

Let YOUR will, God, be mine today,

Help me to love and care!

—Peggy Ferrell, Poems, Prayers and Hymns



To Make A Way To The Cross



# Christian Symbols

## Crown

The crown, a symbol of royal authority, represents Jesus, the King of Kings. It can also symbolize the “crown of glory,” the eternal reward that faithful Christians receive in heaven (see 1 Peter 5:4). Three crowns are often used to represent the wise men who traveled from the East in search of the baby Jesus.



## Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus’ birth. The wreath’s circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.



## Holly

Holly is a popular decoration at Christmastime, not just for its beauty but also for its religious significance. Holly’s thorny leaves and red berries symbolize Jesus’ Passion and blood, reminding us of the fate awaiting the Christ child. According to old Christian legends, holly first sprang up under Christ’s footsteps, and his cross was made from the wood of holly.



## Spiritual Care

Christians who live only for themselves need to re-evaluate their thinking. Christian philosopher Jacques Maritain said it’s wrong for Christians to aim for piety and holiness while ignoring people who suffer.

“The care of another — even material, bodily care — is spiritual in essence,” he wrote. “Bread for myself is a material question; bread for my neighbor is a spiritual one.”

## Christmas Eve Prayer

Give us, O God, the vision which can see your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

—Frank Borman, Apollo 8 commander

## Celebrate Christmas

Decorate your Christmas tree.

Ring a Christmas bell.

Sing a joyful carol

With a jubilant noel!

Light your Advent candle wreath.

Rejoice with friends on Earth.

Give thanks to God for sending Christ

In this, His Christmas birth.

Share your joy of Christmas

And God’s blessings from above.

Celebrate God’s Graciousness!

Celebrate God’s Love!

## What's so amazing about Christmas?

Consider this: God loved the world so much that he came visiting. God slipped into the world as a helpless baby, without fanfare or heraldry.

Think of it: The baby, born of humble parents, the man a carpenter, the woman still in her teens, scholars say. Jesus was born in a backwater town called Bethlehem, in a stable reeking with animal smells.

It took years before people fully comprehended God’s self-revelation. Even John the Baptist, sitting in Herod’s prison, sent a message to Jesus asking, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”

(Matthew 11:3, NRSV).

Jesus then explained that he was working miracles and bringing good news to the poor.

That became even more clear when Peter concluded that Jesus was “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16, NRSV).

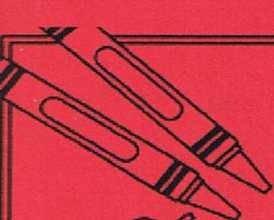
What’s amazing about Christmas is that it began in a manger. And today more than 2 billion people around the world celebrate Jesus’ birth.

**“They Shall Name Him**



**Which Means,  
God Is With Us.”**





# Just for KIDS

## The Son of the Highest

A new baby brings joy and the anticipation of what he or she will grow up to become. Jesus' birth was miraculous, but His life was prophesied and planned by God.

Unscramble the words below, matching them to their correct spelling. Then use the numbers to fill in the correct words to complete Luke 1:32-33 (NIV).

- |           |        |            |         |
|-----------|--------|------------|---------|
| 12. taerg | he     | 2. no5     | forever |
| 8. eh     | Jacob  | 11. seouh  | end     |
| 13. gHhi  | father | 5. northe  | Son     |
| 7. aDvid  | give   | 1. roevfev | house   |
| 10. bocJa | great  | 6. dingmok | throne  |
| 3. reafth | High   | 9. den     | kingdom |
| 4. vieg   | David  |            |         |

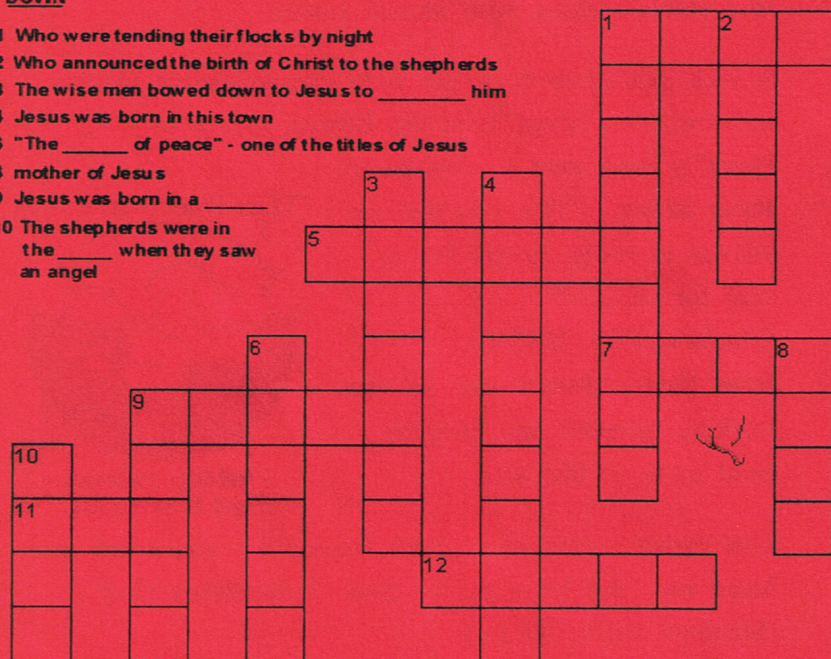
"He will be \_\_\_\_\_ and will be called the \_\_\_\_\_  
 of the Most \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord God will \_\_\_\_\_  
 him the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_,  
 and \_\_\_\_\_ will reign over the \_\_\_\_\_  
 of \_\_\_\_\_; his \_\_\_\_\_ will  
 never \_\_\_\_\_."

*Luke 1:32-33, NIV*

Answers: 1. forever 2. Son 3. father 4. give 5. throne 6. kingdom 7. David 8. he 9. end 10. Jacob 11. house 12. great 13. High

### DOWN

- 1 Who were tending their flocks by night
- 2 Who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds
- 3 The wise men bowed down to Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ him
- 4 Jesus was born in this town
- 5 "The \_\_\_\_\_ of peace" - one of the titles of Jesus
- 6 mother of Jesus
- 7 Jesus was born in a \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 The shepherds were in the \_\_\_\_\_ when they saw an angel

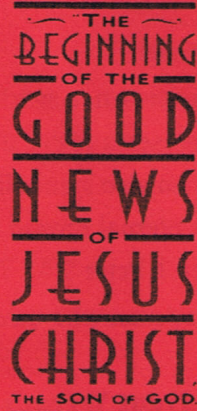


### ACROSS

- 1 The wise men followed a \_\_\_\_\_ that led them to Jesus
- 5 human father of Jesus
- 7 There was no \_\_\_\_\_ at the inn for Jesus
- 9 one of the gifts of the three wise men
- 11 Jesus could not stay at the \_\_\_\_\_ because it was full
- 12 and on earth \_\_\_\_\_ goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)

Which of the four Gospels begins with the following words:  
 "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

- A. Matthew
- B. Mark
- C. Luke
- D. John



Answer: B ~ see Mark 1:1

### Someone took Jesus

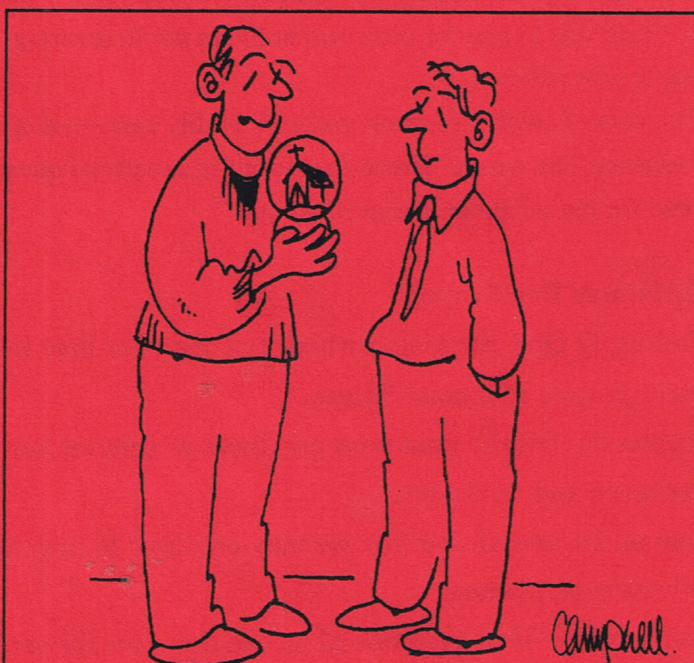
A couple of days after Christmas, the Nativity scene was still up in the chancel of a San Francisco church. Walking by it, the pastor noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the manger. Shortly afterward, as the pastor walked outside the church, he saw a small boy pulling a new wagon. In the wagon bed was a doll that looked very much like the missing baby Jesus.

The pastor greeted the boy and asked him about the doll.

"I got it in the church," the boy replied.

"Why did you take it from the church?"

"Well," the boy answered. "I prayed for a new wagon and told the Lord Jesus that if I got one, I would give him a ride. I got the wagon, took him for a ride and now I'm bringing him back to the church."



"See? The church is full now, but after you shake it and make it snow, the church is empty."





HERE TO MEET

## YOUR NEEDS!

*Join us at one of our services and see how we can help you develop your Christian walk. Here's a list of some of our ministries. And there's more to come!*

**Children's Ministry** To teach children about God, Jesus, and the Bible; to train the children according to Biblical ethics and values; to give them happy, peaceful and pleasing memories of church that will cause them to continue throughout their teen and adult life; to use Biblical lessons as a means of changing their lives and ultimately the lives of their families; to give the children a haven where they feel special and loved.

**Youth Ministry** This youth group exists to create a godly atmosphere where young people can be comfortable; necessary for their spiritual growth in Christ to identify their God-given gifts and abilities; and to give them the opportunity to flourish in service to God.

**"M3" Mighty Men in the Making** To reach young men ages 12-21 with the truth and love of Christ by providing mentoring, education, and promoting spiritual growth.

**"Wellspring" Women's Ministry** To provide a forum where women's needs and concerns can be addressed by the "Living Word of God"; to create an environment of openness, regardless of marital status, ethnic or cultural background; to empower women to be victorious and useful presently and in the future.

**Hospitality Ministry** This ministry in our church is used to tend to the hospitality & pulpit needs of the church. A big part of our Hospitality/Pulpit Ministry is the *Interfaith Hospitality Network*. This network supports homeless families who spend one week a month staying at our church.

**Music Ministry** To provide an atmosphere in which the Father will be pleased to inhabit; to cause the worshipper to move beyond the "Sunday Morning" experience to a lifestyle of Praise and Worship; to minister in the Spirit that so lives will be changed through salvation, healing, deliverance and encouragement.

**Christian Counseling Services** To use Christian counseling as a vital tool in ministering to those deeply hurting; to be a voice of reasoning in their struggle to overcome; to give people a helping hand in rising above their problems and circumstances.

## STAFF LISTING

Jonathan Adams

Charisse Blackwell

Angela Cintron

Joe Cintron

Rev. Constance Hill

Diana Hill

Rev. Lynn R. Hill

Rev. Marvin E. Hill

Ruth E. Hill

Rev Dr. Wilson T. Hill

Beverly R. Johnson

Rev. Sherri L. Johnson

Cami McDonald

Jerry Richardson

Sharon Richardson

Monica Storrs

Robert Waterloo

## MINISTRY

Media Ministry/ Webmaster

Director of Hospitality

Co-Director of Children's Ministry/  
Webmaster

M3 (Mighty Men in the Making) Director/  
Youth Leadership

Associate Minister

Administrative Assistant

Minister of Music

Pastor

Associate Minister

Associate Pastor

Financial Director

Youth Pastor

Newsletter Editor

Transportation Ministry

Director of Children's Ministry

Secretary

Christian Counselor

Are you trying to work through some issues that seem a little too big to handle on your own? Do you ever feel like you could

use some personal spiritual guidance? Whether you are working on issues from your past or present, we may be able to help. Here at Rivers of Life we have a Christian counselor on staff. **Minister Robert Waterloo** is certified through the *American Association of Christian Counselors*. He has years of experience in many areas of ministry, from leading adult Sunday school classes to being on worship teams, as well as being the Head Usher here at R.O.L. If you feel like you could benefit from personal, Christian based counseling, please feel free to contact the church office at (724) 339-1135.

Minister Waterloo would be happy to help you!

*Counseling*  
AVAILABLE





# Looking Ahead

## Ways to start off the New Year

According to historians, the celebration of the New Year is the oldest holiday. Ancient Babylonians first observed it in the spring about 4,000 years ago. In 153 B.C., the Roman Senate declared January 1 as New Year's Day.

The early church started to hold religious observances that coincided with pagan celebrations. Some denominations still mark Christ's circumcision on New Year's.

The tradition of making resolutions dates back to the Babylonians, who often promised to return borrowed farm equipment. Using a baby to symbolize rebirth and the new year dates back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians.

Modern-day New Year's customs often focus on prosperity. In Spain, people eat 12 grapes at midnight, hoping to have 12 happy months to come. The Dutch eat donuts because another year has come full circle.

One of the best ways to start off the New Year is by spending time in prayer. Look back on God's many blessings during the completed year and ask for his guidance in the one to come. Also consider starting the tradition of praying for people around the world on New Year's Day.

❄️ ❄️ ❄️  
NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR

❄️ ❄️

## Special dates

- First day of winter, December 21, 2008
- Christmas Eve, December 24, 2008
- Christmas Day, December 25, 2008
- New Year's Eve/Watch Night, December 31, 2008
- New Year's Day, January 1, 2009
- Epiphany, January 6, 2009
- Baptism of the Lord, January 11, 2009
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 19, 2009
- Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2009



## Origins of Watch Night

Many congregations gather on New Year's Eve to welcome the New Year through worship and prayer. Watch Night services provide an opportunity to thank God for past blessings and to ask for his protection and guidance in the year ahead.



The practice is traced back to Moravian Christians and was later adopted by Methodism founder John Wesley. Watch Night became important for African-Americans on December 31, 1862, as slaves waited for the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect the next day.

A Bible passage tied to Watch Night is Mark 13:32-37. Jesus warns Christians to "keep watch" (or, in some versions, to "keep alert" or "keep awake") for the end of the world.

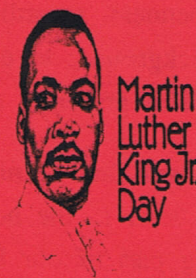


The Newsletter Team  
**WANTS YOU!**

**Do you have an idea for a story, a poem, a testimony or a suggestion? We want to hear from you! Send an email to [camimcd@msn.com](mailto:camimcd@msn.com), or look for**

**a TRIB box on the media table. Then watch for your contribution in an upcoming issue of the Trib.**

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."



Martin Luther King Jr.

## December 2008

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |

## January 2009

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

