



the ENCOURAGER magazine

October 2023



GOD HEARS

C O L U M B I A C O M M U N I T Y C H U R C H

ON THE COVER

Longtime congregants Tony & Rainy Taylor bring sunshine to a cloudy day during their photoshoot on 12/03/23.

Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE **1** A Word from the Word

PAGE **3** Safe Holiday Season: Carolyn Fleming, RN

PAGE **4** Christian Comedy Corner

PAGE **5** The Librarian's Desk: Desiree Collins

PAGE **6** Blessed Assurance: W. LaFrance-Chambers

PAGE **7** Featured Article: Kim Odoms-Bolden

PAGE **9** Getting to Know: Anthony & Lorraine Taylor

PAGE **21** Let Us Pray: Angela Hunt-Bonitto

PAGE **23** He Will Answer: Taylor Landrum



THE MAGAZINE **STAFF**
Oct 2023

PASTORS

Rev. Reginald L. Elliott, Pastor
Juanita Elliott, Assistant Pastor
Min. Linwood Childs, Assistant Pastor

EDITOR

Michael R. Spry

GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRINTING

Michael R. Spry
T/A Gadgets & Garments of Praise
mjspry@comcast.net

WRITERS

Assistant Pastor Linwood Childs
Desiree Collins
Collin Dunlap
Pastor Juanita Elliott
Pastor Reginald L. Elliott
Carolyn Fleming, RN
Crystal Hood
Angela Hunt-Bonitto
Carolyn Jackson
Winnie LaFrance-Chambers
Taylor Landrum
Brenda Manoke
Min. Michael Manoke
Kim Odoms-Bolden
Earl Slacum
Michael Spry

The Encourager Magazine is a quarterly publication of Columbia Community Church

Please Call or Visit Us:

8516 Thomas Williams Way
Columbia, MD 21045
410 / 465 - 7040

On The Web:

www.columbiaccmd.org

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

As a member or guest of Columbia Community Church, we want to notify you that your photograph or image may be recorded during services or church events. Your entrance into CCC grants permission to use your image in print and electronic media material.



page01

theENCOURAGERmagazine



A WORD FROM **THE WORD**

PASTOR REGINALD L. ELLIOTT

"Call unto me, and

*I will
answer thee*

*and show thee
great and mighty things,
which thou knowest not."*

Jeremiah 33:3, KJV

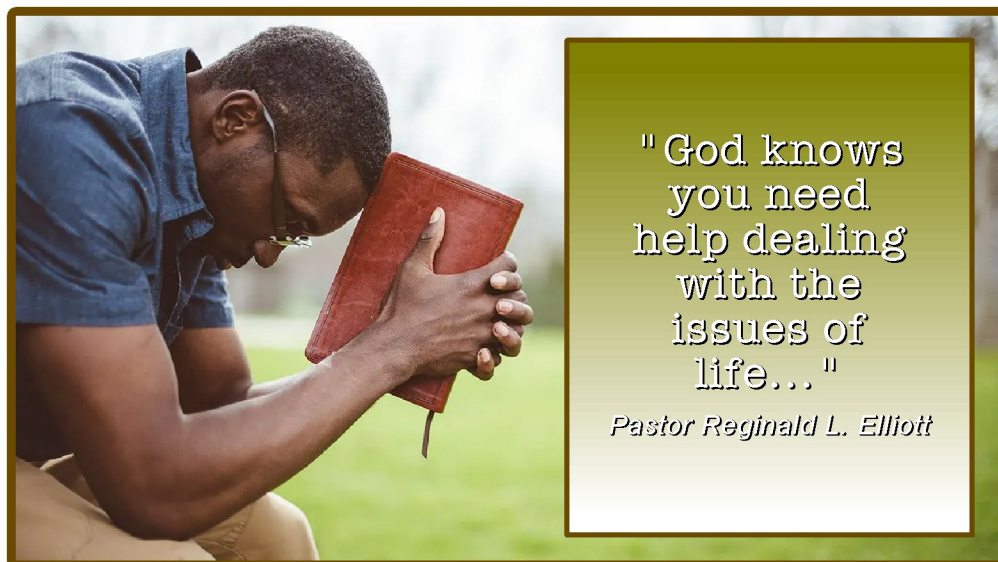
GOD HEARS




here is a recurring theme found in the word of God and it is this - God knows the limits of human ability and He wants to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. However, to receive God's help there is something we must know and something we must do. We must know that God will help us if we ask Him, and then we must ask Him. He will hear us if we will call on Him.

Sin is the major problem mankind has to deal with, and in some capacity it touches the lives of every individual living. Sin is behind every problem mankind faces. This does not mean that sin is the direct cause of every problem. Rather, it means that all the problems we face are in the world because of the effect of sin. God has provided the only remedy for sin, God (through faith in Jesus) is the only solution.

We see this in the life of ancient Judah. Judah had sinned, had turned away from obedience to God and God, in His love, sent the prophet Jeremiah to call them to turn from their sin and turn back to Him. In Jeremiah 33:3 God spoke these words to them, "call upon me and I will answer thee." If you call, I will hear.



We see a similar message in Matthew 7:7 where Jesus spoke the following words to Israel regarding how to have their needs met, "ask and it shall be given." As Jeremiah told ancient Judah, Jesus tells the people of His days the same message. God knows you need help dealing with the issues of life and He wants to help you. Ask God, call on Him and He will hear and help you.

Man is as helpless now as he was in the days of Jeremiah and the days when Jesus walked the earth. You and I cannot solve our problems using our wisdom and ability. We need help. The answer is simple. Just believe that God is, cry out to Him and He will hear and answer you. He says to us - "call upon me and I will answer" and "ask and it shall be given." Exercise faith and cry out to Him, He will hear you. 

ENJOY A SAFE **HOLIDAY SEASON**

CAROLYN FLEMING, RN



From Thanksgiving to mid-January, families gather, parties are scheduled, and travel spikes. Our primary goal should be to have a safe/injury free season.

Travel Safety: Travel by car has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation based on fatalities per passenger mile, according to the National Safety Council. Make sure your car is in good working order. Avoid driving drowsy. Make sure everyone is buckled up. Put the cell phone away while driving. Alcohol, over the counter, prescription and illegal drugs can cause impairment.

Decorate Safely: Emergency departments see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating. Keep potential poisonous plants away from children and pets. Make sure artificial decorations are labeled “fire resistant”. Live trees should be watered frequently and removed when dry. Place trees away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources. Keep breakable ornaments or those with detachable parts where small children can’t reach. Watch for frayed or bare wires and loose connections. Watch out for “fire starters” – candles and fireplaces. The National Fire Protection Association reports about 46% of fires annually in December are caused from candles.

Turkey Fryers: The Consumer Protection Safety Commission reports there have been hundreds of turkey fryer related fires, burns, or other injuries and millions of dollars in property loss from these incidents.

Food Poisoning: Wash hands frequently when handling food. Keep raw meat away from fresh produce. Avoid cross contamination by using separate cutting boards and utensils for cooked and uncooked meats. Check safe meat temperatures by using a meat thermometer. Refrigerate hot or cold leftovers within 2 hours of being served. Holiday leftovers are safe for 3-4 days when properly refrigerated.

Toy Safety: Choose age-appropriate toys. Avoid toys that require the use of electrical outlets for children under the age of 10 years. Be cautious about toys that have button batteries or magnets which can be harmful if swallowed. Wear helmets with scooters or other appropriate riding toys.

Let’s Thank God For A Safe, Healthy, Holiday Season For Our Families And Friends!





CHRISTIAN COMEDY**CORNER**

CAROLYN**JACKSON**
COLLIN**DUNLAP**

Did you hear about the thief who stole a calendar?

No, what happen to him?
He got 12 months.

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



To my children: Never make fun of having to help me with computer stuff.
Remember I taught you how to use a spoon.




What did the paper say to the pencil?

Write on.



I haven't really done anything today.

I've been in the produce department at the supermarket trying to open their stupid plastic bags.

So you've been eating hot dogs and fast food all your life, but you won't take the COVID vaccine because you don't know what's in it. Are you kidding me? 



**Blessings 2U,
Sister Carolyn Jackson
Brother Collin Dunlap**



LIBRARY HOURS
Open Every Sunday

Before Service:
10:00am - 11:00am

After Service:
Until 2:00pm

THE **LIBRARIAN'S DESK**

DESIREE COLLINS

GOD CARES...


...or, what to do when you are waiting for an answer from God.

Genesis 16:11 demonstrates that God hears, sees and cares. But He won't be rushed by our time line or allow Himself to be manipulated by our wants and desires. God does and will keep His promises because he cares and loves us beyond our ability to understand (Ephesians 3:19).

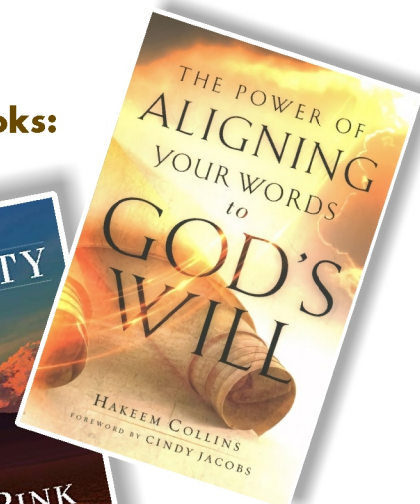
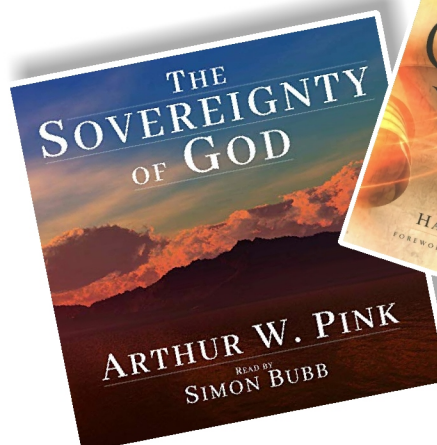
We all know the story of Sarah and Abraham; and how they attempted to receive God's promise child through their own scheme. Sarah believed she was too old to have a child so Sarah and Abraham devised their own plan because they did not have the faith to care enough to trust or believe God's plan for their lives. Trusting God often requires not knowing how or when God is going to accomplish what needs to be done.

When God directs our path, sometimes it leads us in a way that does not make sense to us – trust, believe and obey anyhow. We are required to accept God's timing for we know that God's plan for our life is good, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). When we entrust ourselves to God we can experience peace and joy in our heart and mind that surpasses human understanding.

As Believers we are required to wait patiently for the Lord. Waiting patiently for the Lord is trusting that He knows and sees things that we don't know or understand and that His timing is perfect. Often times we become impatient and anxious and move ahead with our plans without direction from the Holy Spirit. Much stress, anxiety and trouble results from us wanting to make things happen before their time. One of the ways God asserts His sovereignty is in the timing of people, places, and things. When we get ahead of ourselves it may cause us to forego the blessing God has in store for us.

To wait is to rest trustfully in God (Isaiah 40:28-31). We can truly rest in His sovereignty and wait for God's presence, for He will show up. Our God is omniscient, all-knowing – He doesn't need our help. 

Recommended Books:



BLESSED ASSURANCE

WINNIE LaFRANCE-CHAMBERS

We are living in a time when people expect to receive things quickly. Let's use the internet as an example – information at our fingertips within seconds. In many ways the internet has spoiled us to think that is how quickly things should occur in our everyday lives. Whenever we seek something online and there is a delay due to website issues or slow connections, it can spark a frustration in us. The same can be said about our communication and expectations of God. After facing negative experiences in life and praying, if we do not see a resolution or sign that comforts us, we are almost in a panic. God hears us, God sees us, and we need to understand that doesn't change even in the quiet moments when we don't receive the answers we expect at the time we expect them. Just like when we experience delays with the internet, we know that things will be resolved eventually and that the delay won't last. Let's exercise that same level of trust.

I recently had a situation where I was worried about a decision that I made for an event at work. I couldn't undo it, but I didn't see the result going well. I started to feel sick to my stomach thinking about it as things started to unfold. Before any actions could take place, God stepped in and canceled the event. I was so happy! Truly God saw my concerns and moved in my favor.

Here are some verses that help me in the quiet moments:

Psalm 66:17-20 (ESV)

I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

Proverbs 15:29

John 9:31

Isaiah 65:24

Philippians 4:6

Jeremiah 33:3

Hebrews 11:1

Jeremiah 29:12-13

James 5:13-15

Matthew 6:8

1 Peter 3:12

Matthew 18:20 (ESV)





Etched in my heart

FEATURED ARTICLE
KIM ODOMS-BOLDEN

During this journey over the past 6 years two experiences are forever etched in my heart, body, mind, and soul. The Bible tells us no ear has heard, no eye has seen, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him. I remember feeling like all things that had been given to me by my Father in heaven were being taken away. I experienced health issues and I remember having to pick my leg up with both hands, position it on a step and then pray it would sustain me to get where I was trying to go. I remember feeling like “almost” all my friends had disappeared. I was no longer invited to birthday celebrations, special events or just to lunch. Because I was no longer in position to give as I had in the past, Christmas gifts were no longer exchanged nor were they given. Although I was no longer part of the joyous activities it didn’t stop me from hearing about others who were traveling, attending celebrations, and enjoying other festivities. I felt as if God was forsaking me. So, I prayed, “Lord everything I have you gave it. Every good and perfect gift is from above and if you didn’t give it I don’t want it.” I also began to be thankful for the lack of invites for various reasons. The first was that I knew God orders the footsteps of the righteous and if His order did not call for me be at a certain place at a certain time I was better



I felt as if
God was
forsaking
me


Kim Odoms-Bolden

than good. The second was like Moses, I said, “God if you’re not going. I don’t want to go. I only want to go where You go.” Thirdly, I said, “Everything I have, it’s ALL Yours. You own ALL the cattle on a thousand hills take what You will. But only You Lord, no one else. In Jesus’ Matchless Magnificent Name!” While in this trial I specifically asked for a few things. Faced with the realization that the medical field operates on a “class system” I asked that God would not allow me to be without health insurance. Not only did God not allow it, to this day He has blessed me with more insurance than I have ever had. The second thing I will share, is I asked God to let me be the recipient of five one-hundred dollar bills preferably from someone I would never have expected it. It was suggested I attend a grief meeting at the church and honestly my first thought was, “Hmmm...not sure.” But, because of the person who suggested it I attended.

When I left the meeting I hurried as I was delivering food to someone else and one of the other attendees called my name, ran after me and they handed me something in my hand and when I got home I looked at it and it was five one-hundred dollar bills. As God is who He is. It happened two more times. Someone drove to my home put a bag on my outside door handle and then called me to retrieve it as they drove off. Five one-hundred dollar bills. Another time I received a phone call and I was told during their prayer time with the Lord my name came up, and they had something for me. When I went to church on Sunday the person handed me an envelope. Yes, you guessed it five one- hundred dollar bills. God hears from Heaven. Although He sits high He looks low. At my lowest, at my weakest, He showed me He is ALWAYS strong.

Today's devotion read: "In your weakness, you will discover My strength through the encouragement and counsel of others... When you are at your lowest, remain before me, and I will bring people to you who carry my heart I will place them around you to help you. I know exactly who you need in your life at the precise time you need it. Even if you have not found them yet, they will find you" (*I Hear He Whispers* by authors Brian Simmons and Gretchen Rodriguez).


God perfects that which concerns us and He maketh us rich (that is rich in spirit and in truth, mentally, physically, spiritually, financially, emotionally and holistically), and He does not add sorrow to it. .

Trust and believe God hears our cry! 



od
hears
from
Heaven

Kim Odoms-Bolden



Taylor

GETTING TO KNOW

ASSISTANT PASTOR LINWOOD**CHILDS**



It might be a surprise for some to know that God actually hears us. It would seem to follow that if people in general believe that God created us then we should, in general, believe that He hears us. If God took all this care to make us in His image, how could He then ignore us. With all of the languages and cultures on earth it would be quite difficult to explain exactly how God could hear all of us at any moment. That is what makes him God! I recently spoke to two individuals who, from their life experiences, are completely convinced that God hears! The couple: William Anthony Taylor (Tony) and his wife of 28 years Lorraine (Rainy) V. Johnson-Taylor spoke with me recently and I invite you to hear them.

Linwood Childs (LC): So, you two don't have to get up early in the morning now that you're both retired.

Tony Taylor (TT): Yes, unless we have an early appointment. Tomorrow my wife has an early appointment, she just had a birthday a couple of days ago and her son, Reggie Johnson, is going to take her out, maybe to the mall and to do some shopping. In the mornings I'll get up and may listen to T.D. Jakes, Joyce Meyers, or Creflo starting at 6:30a.m. We now live in Lanham, MD. You know what I used to do for 30 years right?

LC: No, please tell me?

TT: I was a Transit Operator for the DC Metro, a Bus Operator for 30 years. I didn't work actually *in* DC; because if I had I would not have kept my job. The DC area was tough, it's even worse now. I worked out of northern Virginia for 10 years and I then worked in Montgomery County for 20 years, near Rockville – close to the White Flint Mall. But I have been retired for 19 ½ years. A lot of times people who retire don't last long. I know that we are all blessed, but I just feel so fortunate to have been retired that long.

LC: Praise the Lord, Tony, we are here for a reason.

TT: I thank the Lord; I just wish I was more mobile than I am. You know as you get older things happen and I have had so many underlying medical issues, but I won't complain.

LC: God is always good!

TT: You see me with my car, but I do carry my cane in the back of the car, in the event I do need it. I try to leave it in there and make do without it. But it is getting a little harder without it. I am getting to the point where I feel as though I might have to use
(Continued on Page 11)

I say
I am a
blessed
man
each and
every
day

Tony Taylor





it. You know Min. Childs, I have a crack in my spine. I say I am a blessed man each and every day. How many people you know walk around with a cracked spine, which is pinching their sciatic nerve? I have a L-7 and L-6 vertebrae that are kinda jagged. That and other multiple underlying conditions, but I keep moving. Praise the Lord!

LC: Looks like if you can keep moving then you can keep going.

TT: Amen, sure will! I found out that moving, even a little bit, is better for me than being still. If I just lie there and lie there, I feel worse! God made our bodies to *move*. So, I am discovering that more and more.

LC: Where are you guys originally from?

TT: I have moved around a bit over the years. I spent part of my high school years in Pennsylvania. Have you heard of a city called Latrobe?

LC: I have, yes. [Latrobe is not too far from Pittsburgh]

TT: While I was in high school there I played JV and Varsity basketball. I'm also called Doc T, because of my knowledge in the medical arena. I

aspired to become a doctor, but because of financial circumstances I was not able to pursue it.

Now my wife is originally from Columbia, Maryland. Back then they called it Simpsonville, back in the 30s and 40s and 50s. They later became sophisticated, and *other* people moved in and called it Columbia.

Lorraine V. Johnson Taylor (LVJT): It was *all* farmland then. I went to an all-black school called Harriet Tubman. I was a cheerleader in high school and also played the French horn.

LC: *[The Harriet Tubman School was Howard County's only all-black high school when it opened in 1949. It operated for 16 years as a segregated school and closed in 1965 due to desegregation. In September 2022 Howard County reopened the red brick high school as Harriet Tubman Cultural Center, an educational and cultural site dedicated to highlighting historic contributions of black Howard County residents. Bessie Bordenave, a graduate of Harriet Tubman high school, is now president of a nonprofit Harriet Tubman Foundation and spoke at the dedication.]*

Where was it located?



LVJT: It was out on Old Route 32 in Simpsonville, MD. You know, there's an Old 32 and a New 32.

TT: Matter of fact we got married in Locust United Methodist Church right off Old Route 32, right down the road from Harriet Tubman High School.

LVJT: Yes, that's where I was raised, right in that church.

TT: Yes, Locust United Methodist Church.

LC: How long have you two been married?

TT: It's been 28 years.

LC: That's great.

TT: I'm a country boy. I am from Northumberland County, VA. Have you ever heard of Colonial Beach, VA? I'm originally from Heathsville, VA, just north of the Northumberland Plantation. I grew up on a farm but did all kinds of jobs. I grew up as a water boy.

LC: Okaaaay, what is a water boy?

TT: Well, I had never even seen a cotton field until about 20 years after I came north to the DC area. I used to help my grandfather and my uncle fish crabs and oysters, and I worked the crab pots. I

used oyster tongs. We would get into the boats and drop these huge steel forks or tongs onto the bottom of the riverbeds and let it drag it to pull up oysters; that was *the hardest work I've ever done*.

Later as I worked near the railway, I used to help build and re-build yachts, especially the keels-repairing, shellacking them and more. I did these jobs while still in high school.

When it was time to graduate from high school, there really were not any jobs around there, just other farm jobs. So, I moved to Baltimore because I had a lot of relatives there. My first job away from home I was a busboy at Hotshots, a restaurant in Edmonson Village right there off of Route 40 by A. D. Anderson Chevrolet lot, near the old Hecht company. I transitioned from there to Washington DC. There I worked at the Clara Barton American National Red Cross center, at 2025 E St. in Washington, DC. I worked there for a few years and also worked for the company that built the Watergate Hotel, the George Harmon Construction Company. Then when I left there I went to Pepco as an Electrical Mechanic; working there for a few years until I started working for the Metro DC bus company.

LC: Well, it certainly looks like you were very busy!

(Continued on Page 13)

TT: Min. Childs I've been working all my life. Since we lived way out on a farm, we didn't have running water. You had to wind it from the well, right outside of the back door. I was the kid that was 'nominated' to put the oil skins on. They were heavy overalls made of rubber. My grandfather used to keep an old raggedy .22 caliber rifle behind his big radio. The radio was really just a big piece of wood with a small dial on it. The wood was almost 5 feet tall, but that was our radio. Anyhow, that's where he kept the gun, right behind the radio.

LC: *[Tony began to describe the process and preparations needed to slaughter their hogs that they kept a distance from the house. What he*

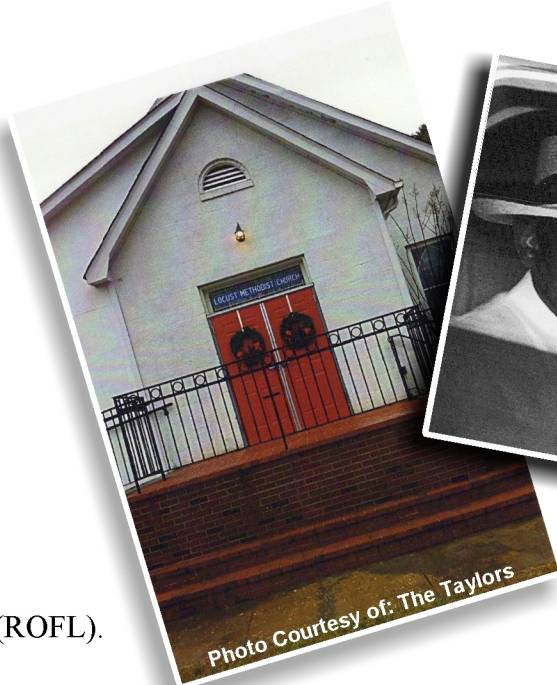
recalled was tough and gruesome work, but even as he described the tools and actions, it did not seem to bother him.]

TT: But the interesting thing was even though I would kill the hogs, eat the pork, the bacon, sausage and porkchops, but to this *day*, as I am speaking to you, I have *never* eaten those chitterlings. They would stink so bad! Smell up the whole house. My mom would spend the entire day washing them, rising them up and down, up and down. The smell would stay in the house for almost a week. I can recall going to bed at night and remembering resting my head next to a windowsill at night by the open window, just to catch fresh air!

I look back and am
so grateful for being
raised in a Christian home

Rainy Johnson-Taylor





LC: (ROFL).

TT: My brother, when he got old enough, was so desperate to leave home, he started hitchhiking from Virginia to *California!* *He was trying his best to get out of Dodge.*

LC: LOL.

LVJT: Nearly everybody called me “Rainy” for short. My childhood was great because my grandfather had land. He gave all five of his children land. Therefore, all our houses were grouped together. We ate our own pears, apples; we had cherry trees, a grape arbor, and a garden. We even had a mulberry tree. There was a cellar for my grandmother’s homemade jelly and other homemade goods.

LC: Your family was very fortunate to own land.

LVJT: I loved my two brothers, sister and half-sister. My eldest brother and sister have now passed on. I am so proud of my baby brother. He served in the Vietnam War and traveled the world over. He served in the U.S. Army for over 30 years. God blessed him to return him home to us. You know, we really want the very best for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We ask the Lord to watch over them.

LC: Amen, He hears you. Tell me how did you

meet Rainy?

TT: You know where Rockville is? That was one of my better routes, called the T-2, from Friendship Heights and I ran from there to River Road out through Potomac, through Falls Road and ended up in Rockville. So, on this particular day as I got to the end of my line (we called that the layover) it was raining and my bus was empty. I’m eating my sandwich and reading my paper. I just happened to look up and saw this really nice lady walking under an umbrella. She was going to this little country store, on Stone Street. So, she kind of caught my eye.

LC: At this point I stopped Tony and asked Rainy if Tony had missed anything.

LVJT: (laughing) Oh, no, he did not miss anything.

LC: Both Rainy and Tony concurred it was during their lunch break around noon.

TT: She has always been an avid walker. She still walks today as much as she can, but used to walk every day.

LVJT: I worked for the Montgomery County government, [She inserted this information, while laughing in the background]. Go ahead babe, you finish your story!

(Continued on Page 15)



TT: I will wait for her to finish laughing. So, when I first saw her, I had to throw down my newspaper and walked over to her. Asked her, "How are you doing? May I walk you to the store." All the while keeping an eye on my watch because I knew I had to get back to my bus schedule and back to work. So that's how it started. The next thing we did, we went to a picnic and that's when I really noticed her for the second time. From that time on we just started talking and being friends. Later we met each other's parents and family. Then about two years later we got married.

LVJT: The church that my husband was talking about, Locust United Methodist, that was the church in which I was raised. My grandfather was a pillar at that church. I asked Tony if he would mind if I went back to that church to be married since I was raised there. He agreed and everybody came up from Virginia for the wedding. My mom who died a year later, was there for our wedding. She was so elated that she bought everything: my flowers, my dress, just everything, just everything. And it brought back such good memories. My grandfather was a staunch Methodist, so you had to go to church. So, we were raised in a Christian family. Of course, I did not do *everything* I was supposed to, but I knew the rules. Now I had my

son, Reggie, when I was in my teens, and I knew I had to have a plan for my son. Because I had

one more year to finish in high school and *nothing* was going to deter me from that. The good thing about it was that my grandfather and my mother were real, real supportive of me. My grandfather always wanted me to go to college. But I knew I had to finish high school and get a job. For there is no such thing as any of us being on welfare and getting help from the government. My grandfather was going to take care of all that. I finished high school and got a good job. I could go to college later. I worked at Applied Physics Laboratory and had good benefits so I could take care of my son. You know my son, Reggie Johnson, he was in between our house and his other grandmother's house, because I *had* to finish school. So, I sat him down, this is a true story. So, I sat him down at a very young age and told him the importance of education, and the importance of him being a responsible young man. I told him the importance of him loving the Lord. Yes, Reggie, finished high school, graduated from Bethune-Cookman University in Florida, and became a marine! Later on I enrolled at Bowie State. In my last year my mother got very sick and then so did my brother and I had to prioritize my family and take care of them. But I did get 3 ½ years under my belt.

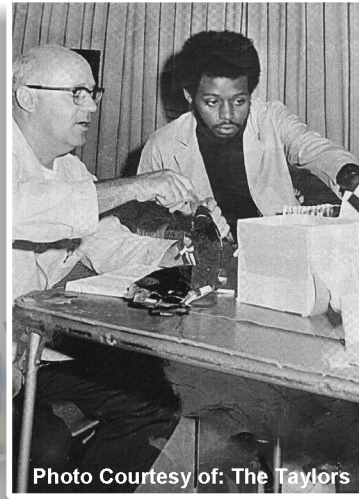


Photo Courtesy of: The Taylors



LC: Wow what a testimony! What did you study at Bowie?

LVJT: My major was political science with an emphasis on public policy. And...my son respects this man right here. He loves him and calls him Big T. My husband is a great stepfather. So, I did get a good job working with Montgomery County government and I stayed with them for about 40 years.

LC: *[Rainy told me she worked in the state's property tax and assessment division. I also saw a framed Governor of Maryland Citation given to Rainy Johnson-Taylor in honor of 39 years for her high integrity and ability in serving the state of Maryland.]*

What a true blessing this is. Of each of your careers in Maryland state government and with the Metro system what were your most difficult battles? What were the most difficult things you had to deal with?

LVJT: Racism. I went *through* with those white people on my job. It seemed every time I turned around, I was at the union filing something. Ugh! But, at the end, when you're raised in a Christian home you forgive, and you move on. So, at the end

I was rewarded, with a great retirement party, co-workers, friends and family, with a governor's citation and other awards. I do not have any complaints because God is so real.

LC: Stand up, even though you must forgive!

TT: Well, I have never lived close to my jobs. I started in June 1974, driving through mostly upper-class and white neighborhoods driving through Fairfax County and Loudoun County. And of course, they gave me the blues, because you went from riding in the back of the bus (like Rosa Parks) to driving the bus? Come on now, you know they were going to give you a tough time. Also, Metro Corp was strict, even though they had great benefits they required you to be **on time**. Even though I had to travel a good distance to get there, I had to be there by 4:30 a.m. each morning. And if you were just five minutes late, they would assign your route to somebody else, and you would be paid only if they had an available standby route for you. It is only by the grace of God I went through all that. I cannot but help give God the credit. In all reality, I do not know how I made it.

Talk about the importance of growing up in a Christian home. My home church, First Baptist of Heathcliff Virginia, is where I was baptized at the
(Continued on Page 17)

age of nine, my mom was the head of one of the church auxiliaries, my father was an usher, and both sang on the choir. My grandfather was the chairman of the deacon board, and I had three uncles that were pastors. We were made to go to Sunday school. Back then there was no excuse. If you stayed out late Saturday night you still went to Sunday school. I played in the small band called the *Intruders* and we played at various places around the county. We split up our fee, each getting about \$30 - \$40 when we played at various venues. We even played at our high school prom. Now, we could stay out to 1 o'clock in the morning even though we didn't, but you still had to go to Sunday school.

I recalled when I was in high school, I was becoming defiant. Now growing up I had chronic nosebleeds. The doctors told my mother that I would just have to outgrow this. So, one Sunday morning I was just saying to myself, that I am just not going to Sunday school. I am just *not* going to no Sunday school this morning. So, here is what I did. I went into the bathroom; I took my head and hits myself as hard as I could in my nose. My nose started bleeding and I ran up from the bathroom into the kitchen to tell my mom.

My mom was always at the stove or at the sink in



the kitchen. I complained, "Mom, my nose is bleeding I can't go to Sunday School." So she set me down in the chair, grabbed a whole bunch of keys and threw them in the freezer. Then she got a towel and held my head back, and then she reached back into the freezer, and got what seemed like 100 keys, as she dropped them down my back! I felt like I was being tortured all because I didn't want to go to Sunday School. I thought, "You gotta be kidding me, Mom!" The next thing I knew I was in the back of our old 52 Plymouth on my way to church. Well, I never tried that again.

Now my brother, his complaint was that the benches were too hard. He would cry, "Mom, Mom the pews are too hard". Nevertheless, he went. But we are where we are because of our parents, and I thank God even today, and every morning for our parents.

LC: *[Tony told us of an accident that nearly cost him his eye. While playing a game his friend accidentally shot something with a bow and arrow that injured his head and caused his eye to pop out its socket. His eye was completely dislocated, and the local doctor had to immediately send him 80 miles to Richmond, VA to a specialist to have the eye reset.]*

TT: That was the longest ride of my life. There is just so many times and so many accidents that I knew God was watching over me.

LC: Both of you are telling a story in which God has heard your heart.

TT: I know that after all of these things nobody fixed these things but God. I often brag on my situations and circumstances because God, who knows my heart, has done these things for us. And I tell God, Lord You know my heart. And that's a good feeling for that's what He looks at. Even the biggest criminal in the world, if his heart gets right with God, he's going to be okay.

LC: Amen and amen! For there is such a thing as forgiveness so with God!

TT & LVJT: Yes, Amen.

TT: Min. Childs, there are so many things that we can look back on and realize God hears us.

LC: Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know about you.

LVJT: I love nature. I can stay outside all day until it gets dark. Ah, just being outside. Also, I love to take pictures of the sunrise.

(Continued on Page 19)





LC: Did you know that Charles Stanley likes to do that also?

LVJT: Yes. He is one of my favorite preachers.

TT: Yes, he was a professional photographer. People may already know this about us: we get compliments all the time about our attire. Strangers just want to take our pictures when we are together. Times have changed and your kind of leery about *why* people take your picture. One Hispanic guy wanted to take our picture and send it to his mother and father in Florida, just because he admired the way we dressed. So going way back to 1969 while in high school I worked to buy my own clothes. I would match this and match the other and make it hookup. At graduation, I was not the valedictorian nor the salutatorian, but I did get *best-dressed*.

LVJT: I was diagnosed with Shingles at the age of 49! Now they say 50 is the age that you should get the vaccine.

TT: I'm 72 now and I'm just now going to get my Shingles shot. In 2005 I was diagnosed with what used to be called "sugar" (diabetes). Look if you want any kind of longevity, you have to take care of yourself. Which may mean getting these types of preventative shots and taking care of yourself! We

grow in the Lord and as you've heard the saying, "I don't go to the places I used to go **nor** do the things I used to do", because we've matured in Christ. After all the things that has transpired in our lives and the things He has brought us through, you know – just know that God hears us!

LC: At the risk of repeating myself, God hears our hearts' cry, prayer is not just words and sound. It has great meaning!

TT: I have worked with five guys that have gone into the ministry. And I am impressed at how they can study and remember Scripture. But for me I have to repeat the Scriptures over and over again until I get it. And I think God is pleased with that. So, I stay right in my lane.






LC: Wrapping up, what are your favorite Scriptures?

TT: That is easy Psalm 30:5, KJV: “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

LVJT: Psalm 85:8, KJV: “I will hear what God the Lord will speak: he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints...” But, I also have to tell you about my granny, she was 104 before she died. I lived with her for a while, she was a godly woman. Do you remember those old metal pressing irons that you used way back in the day? When I lived with her for a while, you know how the bed sheets are always real cold in the winter? She would take that hot iron right off the stove and

warm my bed before I got in it. She would tell me to jump in. And I have never forgotten. I owe a lot to my mother, my granny and my grandfather. But granny would make me say my prayers before I got in! And again she would tell me to just pray whatever was on your heart. So, I prayed for everyone in the family, for God to bless everybody and bless granny too. And then I would jump into that warm bed. I look back and am so grateful for being raised in a Christian home. But back then I thought to myself, “Oh my goodness, am I going to have to do all this for the rest of my life?!” But now I am just so grateful for my Christian home, so grateful because it is just real.

TT: So real!

LC: God heard that! 

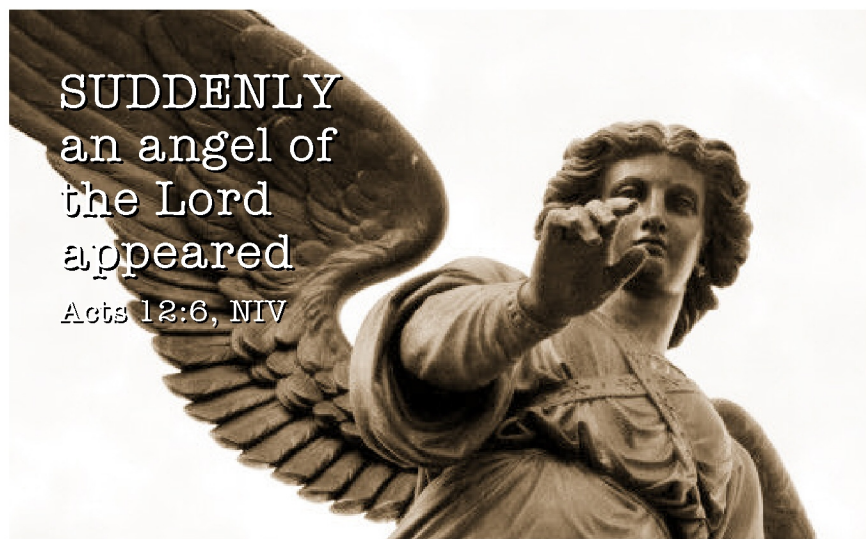
PRAYING EARNESTLY

LET US **PRAY**
ANGELA HUNT BONITTO

Let's start by looking at what the Bible defines as earnest prayer. In Acts 12:5 (NIV) the Apostle Peter was in prison under heavy guard for preaching about Jesus. The church **prayed earnestly** to God for him.

Then Scripture goes on to say, "The night before Herod was to bring Peter to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision" (Acts 12:6-9, NIV).

Verses 11-12 tells us, "Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.'" When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the




SUDDENLY
an angel of
the Lord
appeared

Acts 12:6, NIV

mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying."

This remarkable story from Acts shows how earnest prayer gets God's attention. God responded to the people's earnest prayers by delivering Peter from Herod's prison. He used an angel to lead Peter out from the heavily guarded prison. Much to the prayer group's surprise, Peter showed up at their door.

I believe today we can also pray earnestly for something that we feel strongly about... for example, many of us are angry about injustices against blacks, or now the injustices against Israelis. If we took that energy and prayed against these injustices we might find ourselves pouring our hearts out to God in earnest.



You see, when we pray earnestly for situations or for ourselves, or join with other believers to pray fervently and persistently about situations, we can expect results! There is something miraculous that happens when believers gather to petition the Lord. Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20, NKJV).

Let’s note what Webster’s dictionary says about the words fervent and persistent. Fervent means “marked by great intensity of feeling” and persist means “to go on resolutely or stubbornly despite opposition”. The words fervent and

persistent together provide a dynamic weapon against our enemy, Satan. When those two elements engulf our prayers we can pray in confidence, knowing that God hears us and will do something...He is going to answer us.

Let Us Pray...

Heavenly Father, thank You for this awesome story of answered prayer in Acts. Help us to discover fervent and persistent prayer in a new way. Help us to see prayer as a special and important time with You, and not as a boring chore. In Jesus' name.

Amen! 

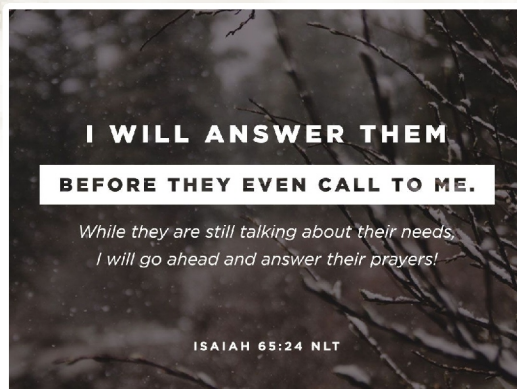
HE WILL ANSWER

TAYLOR LANDRUM

*O*ur God is a big God.


When we think about the magnificence of the God we serve, it actually poses a problem that is impossible for our minds to wrap around. God is *infinite* – and when we take a moment to think about what that really means, we realize that we cannot actually conceptualize infinity. Everything in our natural world has a beginning and an end – no matter how far apart those two dates may be. God not only has no beginning and no end, but He has always existed. Unlike every other thing in existence, God exists outside of the constraints of time and space, and He is capable of doing literally anything.

While the Bible is the ultimate and only truth, more often than not, science cannot help but agree with the Word of God. The world will largely say that science and Christianity are fundamentally opposed, but if science is truly experimentation with the hope for discovery of fact, then science will ultimately find that what God says is true. In that vein, science says that the universe is not only endless, but it is expanding at a rate faster than the speed of light. To anyone who has read the Bible, that discovery screams of the existence of an omnipotent God. He has created a universe that is so vast that it cannot be measured – not only because of its size, but because of the fact that it is growing infinitely larger every second.



When we consider how big and powerful our God is, we ourselves can sometimes feel comparably insignificant. We may ask ourselves how a God who is powerful enough to create our universe could

be concerned with the day-to-day activities with someone as small as ourselves. If God operated by the natural rules of mankind, that would be a legitimate question, but we as Christians know that God operates beyond the laws of nature. He can be everywhere at once, He can be concerned with the thoughts and feelings of every person at the same time, and He cares about each and every person who has ever lived.

The Bible tells us these things – in Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV) it says: “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” This assures us that not only does God care about us, but He is actually physically present with us, and is willing and capable to help us in our times of need. Whenever we ask ourselves if a prayer is too small for God, we have to remember that He hears us. He wants us to pray, and when we pray, He listens. Prayer is our connection to Him – through Jesus Christ, we each have a direct phone line to the same God who created the heavens and the earth. 



ON THE INSIDE COVERS

Inside Front: Congregant and Youth Minister-in-Training, Matt Beuford brings forth the Word as the Lord laid it on his heart during Youth Service on October 22, 2023

Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2023

Inside Back: Pastors Reginald & Juanita Elliott were lovingly recognized by CCC as they celebrated their **57th Wedding Anniversary** in November 2023

Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2023

COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

8516 Thomas Williams Way
P.O. Box 2292
Columbia, MD 21045

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY:

10:00 AM Church School (All Ages)
11:00 AM Meditation & Prayer
11:15 AM Morning Worship

COMMUNION SERVICE:

1st Sunday of Every Month

EVERY WEDNESDAY:

Noon-Day Prayer 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Noon-Day Bible Study 12:00 PM - 01:00 PM
Evening Prayer 07:30 PM - 08:00 PM
Evening Bible Study 08:00 PM - 09:00 PM

1st & 3rd WEDNESDAYS:

Youth Bible Study 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM

GENERAL INFORMATION

CARE & COMFORT MINISTRY

Sis. Linda M. Byrd: 410-313-9673 / Sis. Donna Givhan / 410-997-3276
columbiamdcareandcomfort@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACTS

Phone: 410-465-7040 / Fax: 410-465-0943
Church Website: www.columbiaccmd.org

CHURCH LIBRARY

Open Every Sunday 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM and after service until 2:00 PM