

JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

WE ARE FAMILY: THERE IS A LIGHT THAT NEVER DIMS

January Fighter Verse — Revelation 5:9-10

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.’”

OUR WORSHIP

***DUE TO COVID IN-PERSON WORSHIP SUSPENDED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE***

LIVESTREAM, FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE @ 11:00AM
Www.centralbaptistnyc.org
Adult Sunday School 9:45AM via Zoom
Dial in phone number: 646-558-8656

NEXT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING WILL BE IN FEBRUARY

All members are invited to join us.
Agenda includes

- Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://zoom.us/j/6831601413>
- Or dial in on your phone: (646) 558-8656. Enter the meeting ID 683 160 1413 when prompted.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

On Tuesday, December 28th, there was a fire in Wise Towers on West 91st. So many residents were effected. One small gesture of love we can do for our neighbors is a donation to help residents wash the smell of smoke from their clothes. It's that simple. Make your donations online, by mail, or drop off at the church in person. Be sure to designate the donation for "Wise Tower."



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JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Paul Jones | Jan 02 |
| Christopher Phillips | Jan 08 |
| Georgia Ana Coates | Jan 09 |
| Myrna Phillips Gibson | Jan 09 |
| Christine Lewis | Jan 11 |
| Jarren Bolden | Jan 11 |
| Omari Pusey | Jan 12 |
| Madelyn Woodard | Jan 13 |

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Taji Phillips | Jan 13 |
| Lenworth Bennett | Jan 13 |
| Coralita Simon | Jan 16 |
| Michelle Newkirk | Jan 18 |
| Ruth Browne | Jan 20 |
| Judy Sabater | Jan 21 |
| Elaine Parker | Jan 22 |
| Grant Jefferson | Jan 23 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Noah Foster | Jan 23 |
| Edith Phillips | Jan 26 |
| Marta Clark | Jan 26 |
| Clarence Williams Gee | Jan 29 |
| George Berrios | Jan 29 |
| Kaylee Castillo | Jan 29 |

PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL



Why We Can't Afford Not to Give

1 Kings 17:7-16

Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him:⁹ "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food."¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?"¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

¹² "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

¹³ Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son."¹⁴ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land."

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

God sends the prophet Elijah to the town of Zarephath to find relief from the effects of severe famine. When Elijah arrives in Zarephath, he finds a widow at the town gate gathering sticks. A conversation between Elijah and the widow soon ensues, with Elijah asking the widow for water. There were strict rules that governed hospitality in the ancient world so this widow stops what she is doing and complies with Elijah's request. Perhaps the first request was a test to determine the widow's willingness to comply, the second request would test smoothing much more than that, it was a test of the widow's faith. After asking for water Elijah makes an even greater request, "and bring me please a piece of bread."

Under normal conditions asking for bread would not be asking for much, in fact under normal conditions the widow would have offered Elijah more than just bread. But these were anything but normal conditions, they were living in the midst of a severe famine created. And to explain why the request for bread could not be met, the woman shares with Elijah her background story. The sad story that the widow then tells is enough to make anyone's heart break. The widow had only a little oil and flour left, she would use this little oil and flour to make her and her son something to eat, and then after they ate this meal, because they had nothing left, the widow and her child would wait until they both eventually died of starvation.

But there is something within this widow's explanation to Elijah that are at odds with each, the beginning and the end of the widow's explanation are incompatible. The widow starts her explanation by acknowledging Yahweh, Elijah's God, is alive. She ends her explanation by saying that after having her last meal the only thing that she and her son can

look forward to is death. God is alive but I can only anticipate death. God is alive but I see no hope in my situation. God is alive but my circumstances are beyond saving. God is alive but there is no way out of my



"Prophet Elijah and the Widow of Sarepta"
by Bernado Strozzi, 1680. Oil on canvas

situation. The two statements are incompatible because since God is alive then that should give us a hope greater than the expectation of death. Since God is alive our circumstances don't have to get the best of us. Since God is alive, we have reason to believe that our current situation doesn't have to be our final situation. And because God is alive you and I should never give up on life. Author and Frederick Buechner says this, "it is because God is alive the worst things are never the last things."

Despite the widow's sad story and her clear and reasonable objections as to why she cannot be generous because even this simple act of generosity accelerates what is already in her mind

the inevitable, Elijah presses the issue. Elijah insists that she use the little oil and the little flour that she had left to first make him a small cake of bread. Elijah encourages the widow by first encouraging her to not be afraid, Elijah then gives the widow further reassurance by pointing her to the promise of God. Elijah says to the widow what God has promised him, verse 14, "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the ground."

Don't miss how difficult a decision this must have been for the widow; she didn't have much and the little she did have God was now asking her to surrender to the prophet. The text moves smoothly between verses 14-15 but there had to be a grueling interval between these verses, a period of intense contemplation on the widow's part. The widow was stuck between a rock in a hard place, she had to choose between two options and neither option seemed pleasant. Whether to trust in what she had in her hand or trust in the word of God spoken through the prophet.

The widow eventually makes the only choice she could have to trust in God. 1 Timothy 6:17 instructs those who have means to not to trust in their riches because wealth is uncertain but to trust in God. Those with resources have the option of trusting in what they have or trusting in God, those without resources don't have that luxury. What the widow had was never going to be enough to meet her needs, what she had was never going to be enough to ensure her and her family's survival. What she had was not enough, she had to trust God with her resources because her resources were insufficient. And far too many of us find ourselves in the exact same predicament.

You go to work every day, you are careful with your resources, you may even have a second job, but what you have is not enough. A living wage is the minimum income necessary for a worker to

meet their basic needs: housing, food, clothing, insurance, etc. And for a city like New York with the cost of living being so high, you can imagine that the living wage for New Yorkers is also extremely high as well. Fortunately, the state of New York has raised the minimum wage over the past few years to the point that it currently stands at \$15.00 an hour; double what it was just five years ago. The yearly income for the person earning minimum wage in New York then is just over 31,000.00. For some of us that may sound good, until you realize that the living wage/ income for a single adult with a child in New York City is over 65,000 dollars a year and for just a single person with no children it is still over 36,000 a year. That means some of us, if not most of us, have had to cut corners to get by and most of us are robbing Peter to pay Paul. We have had to be creative with our finances just so our kids could have certain things.

*"...it is because
God is alive the
worst things are
never the last
things."*

Frederick Buechner

The widow trusted God with her insufficient resources, and her willingness to be generous is the reason why God turned her not enough into more than enough. There is a perception among those who don't have enough that any act of generosity deprives them of resources that they could allocate to themselves or to the needs of families. But

the reality is that in our failure to give, that those who don't have enough to begin with deprive themselves of is an opportunity to see God work in their lives as He turns what is barely enough into that which is just enough. It is not just those who are wealthy who have an obligation to be generous, it is also those who don't have enough, because only in trusting God with our resources can God take and multiply them.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

What will it take for you to trust God to provide for your needs while you share and help meet the needs of another?

SAVE THE DATE

WOMEN'S MINISTRY DISCIPLESHIP UPCOMING EVENT

Discipleship Group Quarterly Meeting
Denim and Pearls

Saturday, January 22, 2022

11:00AM — 1:00PM

Virtual/Online Brunch

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/6831601413>

Or dial in on your phone: (646) 558-8656

Enter the meeting ID 683 160 1413 when prompted.

Wearing Denim and Pearls optional

Guest Speaker:

Rev. Mark Marchak

All Women are Invited



Bible Study, Prayer Meetings & Announcements

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Join Zoom by Phone: 646-558-8656
YouTube

Prayer Meetings by Phone Conference Call

Connection
(712) 770-4711
Access Code: 667293#

Sick and Shut-In:
Monday & Thursday
6-6:30 AM

Men's Ministry
Tuesday and Thursday
6:45-7:30 AM

Mid-Week Prayer:
Wednesday
12:00-1:00 PM
Join Zoom Prayer Meetings
by Phone: 646-558-8656.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY
"POWER HOUR" MEETING
Sunday, January 16 @ 12:30PM
Join by phone at 646-558-8656
"Prayer is our most powerful weapon!"

EVENING PRAYER

Evening Prayer will meet
JANUARY 28, 2022

Dial into the Zoom Meeting with your phone number:
646-558-8656

**All Senior Ministry Activities are
cancelled until further notice.**

MISSIONS

Pray For Our Missionaries

Our missionaries who serve with Missions Door:

Francklin and Nerlie Alexis, Haiti
Felix and Amnerys Abreu, Dominican Republic
Edwin and Liz Colon, Brooklyn, NY
Herode and Edline Guillomettre, Haiti
Duane and Miriam Mansveld, Montreal, Canada
Luis and Azucena Matute, Panama & Costa Rica
Vincent and Maryam Morgan, Brooklyn, NY,
and the Middle East
Ray and Valerie Ramos, Brooklyn, NY
Marvin and Denise Robinson, Rochester, NY

Our missionaries who serve with World Venture:

Barry and Peggy Owen, Asia

Our missionaries who serve with United World Mission:

Matt and Nicole Paschall, Hungary

Our missionary who serves with Urban Life Source Connection:

Dale Belli, New York City

Our missionaries who serve with COMINAD (Cooperative Mission Network of the African Dispersion)

Brian and Ruth Johnson,
Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean

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