

THE GOSPEL

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And she brought forth her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.... For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:7, 11-12

MAJESTY *in a manger*

Recently the world witnessed the passing of royalty, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. With her death, the news outlets and media have shown her position's splendor and majesty. Many accolades have been spoken about her life as a Queen, and many videos and photos have been shown that reveal the dignity and honor she carried as the Queen. In short, Queen Elizabeth's life as the queen has been displayed for the world to see and know the majesty she held as Queen of England. Most people outside the United Kingdom will realize that they knew she was the Queen of England but were not affected by her majesty because she was not our queen. Much was the same a little over 2000 years ago when the King of Kings was born. Not everyone noticed His majesty.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines majesty as a sovereign power, authority, dignity, greatness, or splendor of quality or character. These are characteristics of inward works, not outward works. If we look only for the outward signs of majesty, then we will miss the moment we are in majesty's presence, just as many missed the birth of Christ. When Herod

wanted to know where Christ was to be born, he sought answers from the chief priest and scribes (Matthew 2:3-6). Amazingly, they knew the answer, Bethlehem, but because the majesty they were looking for was outward, they missed the birth of the King. They knew the answer but missed the opportunity because it did not look like they thought it should. Much of Bethlehem did the same. The innkeeper made no room for the royal family (Mary & Joseph) in the inn because they did not look like royalty (Luke 2:7). Could majesty possibly be wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a feed trough? Most people in and around Bethlehem, including the biblical scholars at the time, did not think so. But there was hope because His majesty would be celebrated.

Just as Queen Elizabeth was known and celebrated for her majesty in the United Kingdom, Jesus the Christ would be honored by His kingdom. The people failed to realize that it was not the swaddling clothes and the manger that spoke to the Majesty of Christ. It was the babe in those clothes and manger. The Kingdom of God celebrated the birth of



their King. A special star appeared to direct those that would watch to His birthplace (Matthew 2:2). Once Majesty (Jesus) was born, an angel of the Lord announced His birth and where He could be found, even describing His appearance; once the announcement of the birth was made a host of angels joined together and began to celebrate the Majesty of Christ leading the shepherds to worship and announce the birth of the King, they bowed down before His majesty (Luke 2:8-20). Heaven would recognize the majesty of the King and Savior of the world because of who He was, not what His appearance was like.

When we join that kingdom by believing in Jesus as our King and Savior, we too can realize the Majesty of our King. We not only recognize what the world cannot, His Majesty but also become a part of the royal family. 1 Peter 2:9 calls us a "chosen generation and a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," meaning that when we become a part of the Kingdom of God, we not only recognize the Majesty of Christ, but we are also partakers of that Majesty. Jack Hayford wrote in the song Majesty:

***Magnify, come glorify,
Christ Jesus the King.
Majesty, worship His Majesty;
Jesus who died,
now glorified,
King of all kings!***

The splendor of His appearance of majesty has yet to be seen except by a few (Mount of Transfiguration, Assentation into heaven, etc.). Still, as the worship song declares,

His Majesty reigns above all others, and we see that majesty when we worship and follow Him in faith. 2000+ years ago, Majesty entered this

world in a manger in swaddling clothes, and we have only just begun to see the splendor of His Majesty. As heaven declared His Majesty at His entrance into this world, let us declare to this world His presence and Majesty that is now and is to come. As Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" We look

to the day that we see the splendor of His Majesty face to face. Until then, let us follow the words of the song by declaring, "***Majesty, worship His Majesty!***"

***Heaven would
recognize the majesty of
the King and Savior of the
world because of who He
was, not what His
appearance was like.***



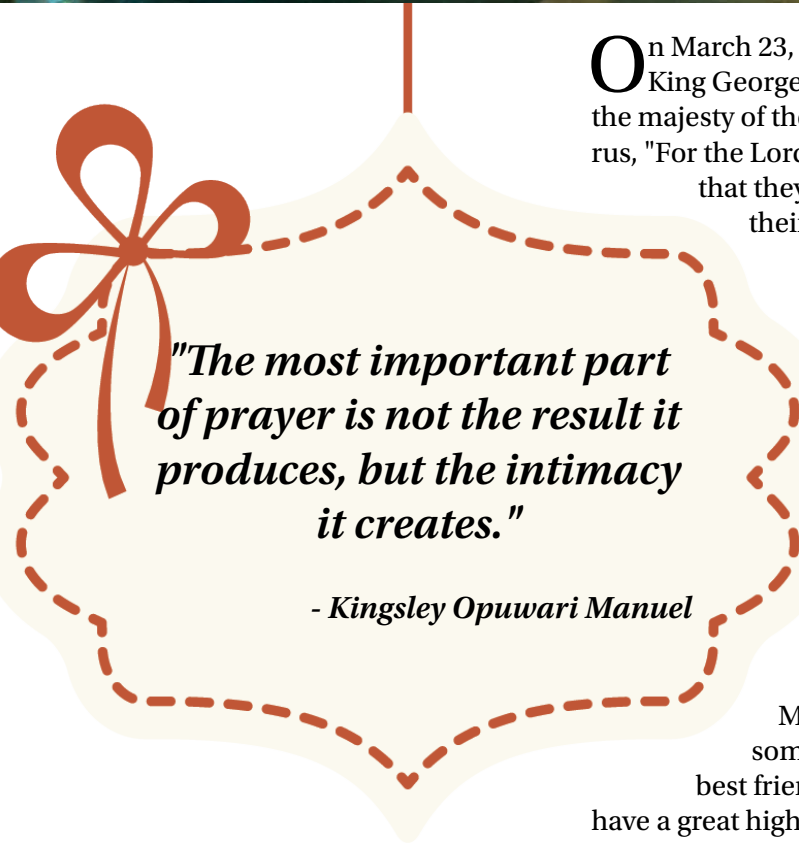
Bishop Scotty Poole

*Bishop Poole serves the CHC as the
General Superintendent*



Intimacy and Majesty

On March 23, 1743, when "The Messiah" was first performed in London, King George II of Great Britain was present in the large audience. When the majesty of the Lord was proclaimed by the words of the Hallelujah Chorus, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth", everyone was so deeply moved that they all rose to their feet at once, including the king, to show their respect and to worship the Sovereign of the Universe.



"The most important part of prayer is not the result it produces, but the intimacy it creates."

- Kingsley Opuwari Manuel

Countries like England, which have an impressive tradition of royalty where a person is granted royal status and treated with the utmost respect and allegiance, have a better understanding of majesty than we do in the United States. Our leaders are subjected to intense scrutiny and often harsh criticism and unjustified attacks. It's difficult for a person to feel "majestic" when they are constantly subjected to criticism and attacks by the media, fellow leaders, comedians, and so forth.

Sometimes I wonder if perhaps our view of God has suffered from our failure to capture the full sense of His Majesty. The God we envision is usually a very personal God, someone with whom we can enjoy intimate fellowship. He is our best friend and the one to whom we can bring all of our troubles. We have a great high priest who became flesh and blood and who understands our hardships. Therefore He could be the perfect Mediator between God and man. Often our prayers reflect our emphasis on closeness and intimacy with God. We are having a conversation with a Friend that is right there sitting



"Happy the soul that has been awed by a view of God's majesty."

- A.W. Pink

beside us rather than approaching the throne of grace of the God Most High.

Intimacy with God was demonstrated best in the actions of Jesus. At one of the worst points in His earthly life, He addressed God the Father as "Abba"

in the Garden of Gethsemane (ref. Mark 14:36). David Guzik said, "In this moment of deep distress, Jesus didn't feel far from God the Father. He felt so close to the Father that He used the name Abba, a child's familiar name for 'daddy.'" This is a beautiful picture of the intimate relationship one can have with God.

But in stressing our intimacy with God, have we lost sight of His majesty? It's not difficult to lose sight of His majesty because God is hard to comprehend in the first place. John Wesley once said, "Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the Triune God."

Even Joseph and Mary had comprehension problems where they lost sight of His majesty when they traveled a whole day's journey before realizing Jesus wasn't with them! This definitely doesn't seem like a good example of "majestic-minded" parents who fully comprehended His majesty does it?

In *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer suggested that a lack of sensing the Majesty of God is one key reason why our faith and worship are weak. Packer believed a person could develop a skewed perception of God as not being big enough to solve our problems, not worthy of time and effort expended in prayer and praise and adoration. Packer also warned about the possibility of remaking God in our own image instead of His true image as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who reigns in Supremacy over the universe.

The fact is that a great gulf exists between God and man because of His greatness and majesty. And as we strive to cultivate an intimate relationship with Him as we should, we must also remember that God is not like us. He is not limited in His wisdom, His presence, His power, or His effectiveness like we are. We must always strive to keep things in perspective. While God is our "Abba" Father with whom we find intimacy, He is also the eternal, infinite, and almighty! And you guessed it; we are not the God of the universe.

***To the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty, dominion and
power, both now and ever. Amen.***

- Jude 25



Rev. Jonathan Fitzpatrick

Rev. Jonathan Fitzpatrick serves the CHC as World Mission Executive Director.



Over 1,500 shoeboxes from CHC churches all around the USA ready to bless people all around the World! Thank you for your faithful giving!





Glory to God in the Highest!

Have you ever paused to look up at the stars? I think children do this often. A few days ago, my oldest child gazed into the night sky and said, "Wow, look at all the stars!" When she said that, a lightning bolt shot through my Spirit. It was not so much what she said but the amazement in her voice that grabbed my attention. She was engulfed with wonder. Her little mind was astonished as she took account of the countless twinkling lights she saw. While I was tempted to turn my eyes heavenward and look with her, I could not turn my gaze off of her little face. Her eyes were wide open, viewing as many square miles of the night sky as possible. And she had the biggest smile as her mind raced to understand what she was seeing. It was a moment I will never forget. Then, I had the opportunity to share how God created each of those beautiful lights and holds them all into place with His power and majesty. How amazing it is to look at the night sky's splendor and be reminded of the majesty of our great God.

Do you remember when the shepherds learned of the birth of our Savior? On the same night that Jesus was born,

in a nearby field was a group of shepherds watching over their sheep as they had done many nights before. I have the privilege of being in that very shepherd's field where these men were the night Jesus was born. The cave in the field they used to shield themselves and their flock during dangerous moments or in bad weather was nothing spectacular in its construction or appearance. However, God's wonderful power and majesty filled the night sky to announce the much-anticipated birth of the Savior of the world.

"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.'"

Wow! Can you imagine for a moment what it must have been like to have your day interrupted by this beautiful and majestic angel in the night sky? Their reaction to the beauty and power of this Messenger was to be fearful and understandably so. However, their message began with peace. "Do not be afraid..." Beloved, be encouraged today that while this world most certainly brings its heartaches, we never have to be afraid, for the same God who spoke the stars into the night sky is the One who is on our side. Just as God was working behind the scenes in a stable not far from the shepherd's field, so God is also working in unseen places in your life to bring blessings to you.

If the scene had ended there, it would have been amazing. However, the Majesty of God could not be contained to a single appearance of an angel. It is as if multitudes of other angels were bursting with excitement and could not continue it any longer and had to join in the celebration and announcement.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'"

How majestic! How indescribable this sight must have been. The sound of their voice speaking or singing in unison, I am sure, was the most beautiful sound the men had ever heard. I do not believe they ever look up in the night sky the same again. I think every night, they kept watch over their flock, they wondered, will I see them again? The night sky must have never looked the same.

I want to challenge you this Christmas season. At some point, go outside at night and turn your eyes to the heavens. Allow your heart to be filled with God's majesty. In so doing, you remind yourself of His great power and His majesty. There is truly nothing beyond His ability. Glory to God in the highest!



Dr. Matthew Turner

The Turner Family: Matthew, Anna, Elia, Edyth, and Ephriam. Matthew serves as the Mission USA Administrator for the CHC.

missionusa

MISSION USA

One of the most exciting blessings in Mission USA and the CHC is welcoming new churches into our CHC family. God has given our denomination great favor across the country, and we are blessed to welcome three churches into our family in 2022. Help Mission USA pray for these new congregations and their leadership. Also, continue to pray for all our district leadership groups as they work to find new communities to establish new works across the United States!

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2023

BIBLE READING PLANS

Many years ago, the Congregational Holiness Church started developing yearly Bible reading programs to help encourage people to draw close to God through His word. The guides have expanded over the years as excitement and expectation grew. Mission USA is proud to announce the 2023 Bible Reading Guide lineup. Each guide is available in both English and Spanish languages.

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CONGREGATIONAL HOLINESS CHURCH GENERAL WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

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Answers how to join the CHC



Rev. Brian Willingham

Rev. Brian Willingham serves as the Men's Ministry Executive Director for the CHC.

When my family and I left General Conference last summer, we embarked upon a two-week road trip vacation. We spent several days driving up the East Coast before arriving in New York City. We checked into the Washington-Jefferson Hotel on West 51st Street in the Hell's Kitchen area of Manhattan. Ever since I read *The Cross and The Switchblade*, I have had a deep fascination with the busy streets of New York. Unlike most of the small-town country folks I grew up around, I enjoy the metropolis. There is something of an adrenaline rush that accompanies the speed of a subway ride beneath the towering skyscrapers looming high above the hurried pedestrian traffic.

Wearied from our time on the road, we decided that our first night in New York would be better spent with a short walk near Times Square before returning to our room for some rest. We put on our walking shoes and headed in the direction of Central Park.

Since we were only about six blocks from Trump Tower, we decided to walk by that way. The chaos surrounding the 2021 election still fresh on our minds, the prospect of seeing the home of the former President had a strange but exciting appeal. As we neared the colossal building on West 56th Street, sirens sounded as New York City police officers cleared a path for an approaching motorcade. Soon, we watched in awe as President Trump emerged from a black SUV and made his way through the press. Cheers erupted as the embattled world leader made his way to the steps of the building where he had famously announced his candidacy five years earlier. Being surrounded by the sights and sounds of Manhattan roughly a hundred yards from a United States President was quite surreal for a guy like me who had grown up in small sleepy towns in rural Georgia and Alabama.

When I think back on that day, I am reminded that nothing compares with the majesty of my Savior! I am still in awe that the King of Kings knows my name. While I admire many great leaders in this world, it is unlikely that I will ever have a person encounter with any of them. There are none who can compare to Jesus Christ! A royal king who is also my best friend!

As I look back on 2022, I am thankful for the strides we have made in Men's Ministries. I am especially proud of Gabriel Hutton who was recently selected to be our Junior Executive Men's Ministries Director. Gabriel is a wonderful young man from Woodstock Park CHC in Jacksonville, Florida. I am also thankful for the men who received our 2022 Men's Ministries Awards. These men are but a few of the men who shine as burning lights for the Gospel! To all our men: I am thankful for the difference you make! Keep up the good work!



Rev. Brian Willingham and Gabriel Hutton, the 2022 Jr. Men's Ministry Director

New Haven CHC
Gainesville, GA
February 24-25, 2023

Answer The Call

With music by Philip Willingham

Bishop Ronald Wilson Reverend Justin Griffis

"WHO HAS SAVED US, AND CALLED US WITH A HOLY CALLING." - 2ND TIMOTHY 2:9

Men's Empowerment Conference 2023



Rev. Micah Messer

The Messer family: Caleb, Micah, Laura, and John Mark. Rev. Micah serves the CHC as the National Royal Rangers Commander.

Christmas is the celebration of when the Word became flesh. The Apostle John wrote, “We beheld His Glory... full of grace and truth,” (John 1:14). Jesus is the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3). He is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (Colossians 2:9). Jesus told His followers if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father (John 14:9). They saw the splendor of the Savior. They beheld the beauty of the Bridegroom. They were eyewitnesses of the majesty of the Messiah.

Majesty in the Cradle.

He was humbly born in a Bethlehem barn, leaving the splendor of Heaven for the stench of a stable. The Lamb was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The characters of the Christmas story were “eyewitnesses of His majesty”. Mary respected Him. Joseph protected Him. The angels projected Him. The Shepherds accepted Him. The Star reflected Him. Wise men expected Him. Herod rejected Him. Innkeepers neglected Him. The birth of Jesus records the Majesty in the cradle.

Majesty in the Common.

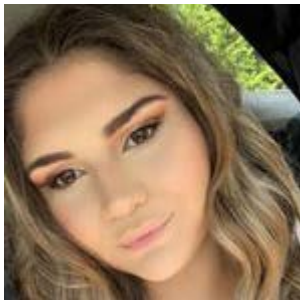
He, who was rich, literally became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). His peasant parents could offer the very least as their very best as an offering at His dedication (Luke 2:24). He was the ‘No-good’ Nazarene (John 1:46). Christ became

the common, blue-collar Carpenter of Galilee (Mark 6:3). Yet He did all things well (Mark 7:37). When He taught profound parables using ordinary objects, simple subjects, and common citizens, they proclaimed never a man spoke like this man (John 7:46). He fed thousands with a few fish and loaves, withered a fig tree with a curse, defied gravity by walking on water, and calmed storms with a whisper. The nation of Israel was an “eyewitness of His majesty” by His parables and miracles. The life of Jesus records the majesty in the common.

Majesty in the Cross.

Crucifixion displayed the creativity of the Phoenicians and the cruelty of the Romans. The cross was a wicked invention perfected for maximum torture. Jesus was flogged and mocked. He was stripped, slapped, and spit upon, before He carried the cross to Golgotha, where He was nailed to the cross between two criminals. Yet Jesus died with the dignity of Deity. He died like a King. He gave up the ghost like a God. No one took His life; He willingly gave it up. He didn’t plead for His life with Pilate. He didn’t beg for mercy from the soldiers. He didn’t curse his persecutors. They were all “eyewitnesses of His majesty” in the cross. We, too, are “eyewitnesses of His majesty” because we see Jesus, suffering in death but crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:9). We look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). The death of Jesus records the majesty in the cross.

This Christmas celebrate the Majestic One (Isaiah 10:24, ESV). “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1, ESV)



Ellie Garcia

Ellie serves as the 2022 Jr. Women's Ministry Executive Director

"Ellie Garcia serves as the 2022 Jr. Women's Ministry Director and is our guest writer for this edition."

Majesty is defined in Webster's dictionary as a sovereign power, authority, dignity, or impressive beauty. My God is all these things and more. Psalm 93:1 describes this: "The Lord reigns; He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed in strength, wherewith He hath girded Himself; the world also is established, that it cannot be moved." God is the source of creation and all its stability. God's supreme majesty is shown in His omnipotence (all-powerfulness), His omniscience (all-knowing), and His omnibenevolence (supreme goodness).

In Revelation 22:13, the Lord says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." This pretty much encompasses everything! And God is everything to me! Not only did God create the heavens and the earth and the animals and the sea, but He created man and gave him free will. God is a performer of miracles, a painter of beautiful sunsets and rainbows, and He is our comforter and friend. He is a good, good Father! The Bible

says in Romans 8:28 that "we know that all things work together for the good of them who love God, to them who are called to His purpose." This is saying that everything will work out for the good of those who love God and do their best to honor His word by following His commandments. We cannot truly fathom God's majesty, and we can never praise Him enough for all He does and has done for us. We can never exalt Him enough for being Himself! Psalm is one of my favorite books of the Bible because it has so many songs of praise to the Lord!

In Psalm 145, King David speaks of five distinct characteristics of God: greatness, goodness, glory, guarantee, and grace. God is so wonderful and deserves praise not just for what He does but for who He is. He is the King of kings, Lord of lords. He is Jehovah-Jireh, my provider. He is Jehovah-Rapha, my healer. And he is Jehovah-Nissi, my banner in victory! He is God Almighty, and He is my everything! I will always put Him first and will thank Him and talk to Him in prayer. I will have steadfast faith, and I will praise Him with the honor He deserves.

One thing I think of often is something I have been taught since I was a young child. To fully exalt God's majesty, we must follow the principle of the Golden Rule of treating others as we would have them treat us! Being a true Christian is not only talking the talk but walking the walk! We lead by example, and actions speak louder than words! So, with God's help, I will love and serve His people in whatever way He calls me to do so! Not only will I speak praises to His Holy Name, but I will live my life as a testimony to His greatness!



Kim Causey

The Causey family: Seth, Shelby, Kim, and William. Kim serves the CHC as the National Girl's Ministry Director

During the Christmas season, since becoming a mother, I often think of Mary. I think of how it must have felt when as a young girl, the angel told her she would give birth to the Son of God. I wonder what her thoughts were after she gave birth to Jesus and looked at His face knowing she was looking at the son of God yet her baby at the same time. What was it like when she whispered His name to Him? Did she feel the power behind the precious name of Jesus when she said it? What a night that must have been when God's majesty was displayed in a stable. How did she take it all in? The Bible tells us in Luke chapter two that the shepherds told everyone what had happened to them and what the angel had said about the child, but Mary kept all those things and pondered them in her heart. I wonder how long it took her to fully understand the magnitude of what had happened that night or if she ever really understood. Whatever her feelings, I know that as a mother, she must have felt the weight of knowing who her baby was and that she would do everything within her power to love, protect and nurture him. I'm so thankful for that beautiful night that the savior of the world, my savior, was born. I'm grateful for the price He paid on Calvary and that He rose again. I'm thankful that one day soon, He will return again to take every one of his children home to be with him. There we will see God in all His majesty and glory. What a day that will be! This Christmas, remember the season's true meaning and tell others about Jesus. Merry Christmas, and may God richly bless you and your families in the coming year.

*I'm thankful that
one day soon, He
will return again to
take every one of his
children home to be
with Him.*



If you attended church regularly in the south as a child, most likely you have participated in a Christmas play or been part of a reenactment of the nativity story. Some of my earliest memories center around our Christmas services at my home church, Lula Assembly of Praise, and to this day, I love the simple story acted out by small children to help us remember and celebrate the birth of the Christ child.

My first time participating in the nativity play was as an angel. I wasn't "the angel of the Lord," but I was part of "a multitude of the heavenly host." In our church, the angels exited out the Sunday school wing and walked around OUTSIDE to the front of the church, no matter what the weather, and just minutes before the scripture were read to announce us, our candles were lit, and we marched in the double doors, which were flung open wide, to the strains of "Silent Night" being played by Mrs. Dianne Saxon.

As a child, the walk from the door of the church to where the angels stood near the baby Jesus seemed very long. There were always a few angels, usually the baby angels, that deviated from the path and ran to their mommas. That was not an option for me. I was older and understood more. As I walked, I was conscious that I was representing the Lord's angels and that my every movement should reflect the joy we were about to proclaim. I felt such a sense of majesty – a beautiful dignity – as I walked with all the other little angels, carrying my light. I didn't know what that feeling was called, but I knew I didn't want anything to dim that light. There were many angels that

night, but I did my part as though I was the only one up there.

Not as many pictures were taken 50 years ago as are taken now, so there are not a lot of pictures of those times. Thankfully, we have our memories of those times, and they grow brighter with age. I didn't realize it then, but I could feel the majesty of the Lord on that Christmas play night, and through the years, the desire to reflect the joy of the Lord and to carry my light has grown stronger. The desire to finish what I started was and is strong. The majesty of the moment when I walked, carrying my light, to take my designated place in the story has never left me. As Christians, I believe we can walk in his majesty – his state- liness, dignity, and beauty, as we carry our light and take our designated place in the story. As you reflect on the Christmas story and view those previous nativity reenact- ments, remember that we serve the King of Kings, and we are part of a royal family, walking in His grace and majesty.

Merry Christmas!

- Redenna



Sis. Redenna Poole

Sis. Redenna Poole is the wife of Bishop Scotty Poole. Sis. Poole serves the CHC as the Minister's Spouse Ministry Director.



Isaac Farmer

Isaac serves as the 2022 Jr. General Superintendent for the CHC.

When I think of the word majesty, I think of something so beautiful, something so amazing that when it is seen or heard, it immediately grabs your attention. Everything about God is majestic. His love, his power, his patience. It amazes me how much he loves. Not just how much he loves, but HOW he loves! It's unconditional love. No matter what we do, his love is more than we could ever imagine. As amazing and perfect as God is, he still chooses us. To love us and show us his mercy. To have patience with us. To cover our sins in love. To heal us. There have been multiple times I've needed a miraculous healing from God, and he's shown me time and time again that he's amazing enough to do it. I could never do or say anything to God to show how much I love him and how thankful I am

for him. But yet he shows me every single day. Every day he wakes me up and gives me what I need and more. He has given me more than I could ever ask for. Because of his amazing, perfect love.

Speaking of giving, as we enter into the Christmas season. Look at the majesty that is the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The thought of a sovereign God, choosing to send his son to a cruel world, just to save us. The magnitude of the ultimate sacrifice given to a human race that would so easily disregard it. Knowing all along the rejection that he would face, yet our actions never altered his love or decision. I'm thankful in this season and every season of my life that his love is not conditional.

If I could give any advice to a young person, It would be to trust that God loves you unconditionally and unfathomably. There will be times you fall, and there are going to be times you mess up, but you are never alone. No matter what you do, there's absolutely nothing you can do to change God's love for you. God is always here; never be scared to run to him because he's waiting on you with open arms to give you what you need!



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