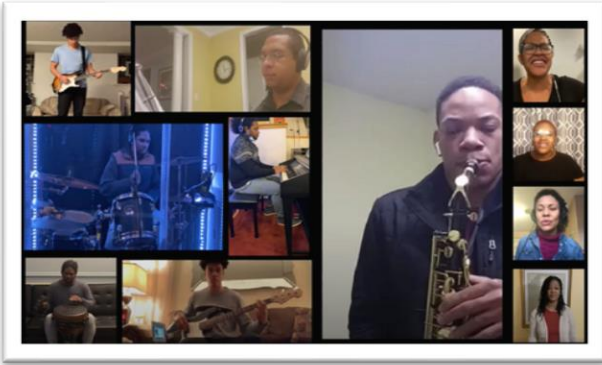


New Year's Eve Service



The Young Adults presented 11 testimonies during the New Year's Eve Service. Marlon & Friends, vocalists and musicians performed the song, "Still Rolling Stones" in 11 frames, all at once on one screen, from seemingly 11 different locations. Dr. Raphael Thomas shared a message from 2 Chronicles 7 and the Praise singers ended with "May My Whole Life Prove That God is Good." If you didn't catch it on New Year's Eve, you still can on GCA's YouTube channel. Go to youtube.com and type "Germantown Christian Assembly New Year's Eve Service" in the search box.

2021 only to transition immediately into 24 hours of prayer at 12:01 a.m. on January 1; to commence the "21 Days of Prayer and Fasting." What a month the Lord gave GCA in January! ✨

The New Year's Eve Service helped usher in

What do you call
a shoe made from
a banana?



A slipper!

FREE EVENT

GCA Kids Club

AGES 6-12

Let's have some FUN!

Tuesdays, March 23 to June 1, 2021

6:00 PM - 7:45 PM

Germantown Christian Assembly
610 East Mt. Pleasant Ave. • Phila. PA 19119
To register, go online to www.gcafamilychurch.org
or call (215) 242-5550.

CHESS CLUB

ARTS & CRAFTS

BIBLE CLASS

COOKING CLASS

GAMES

Dinner will be served at 5:15 p.m.

YOU'RE INVITED

March 2021
Volume 9, Issue 1

In This Issue

- 1, 2 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting and Evangelism Explosion
- 1, 2 Commendation
- 3 New Members Testimony: The McKenies Family Journey to GCA Membership
- 4 Christmas Caroling 2020
- 4 Christmas Eve Variety Program
- 5, 7 Testimonials
- 5 Cartoon
- 6 For Your Health: Diabetes Mellitus
- 6 Sis. Amy's Birthday Party
- 8 New Year's Eve Service
- 8 GCA Kids Club Flyer
- 8 Banana Joke

GCA Reflections

Quarterly Newsletter of Germantown Christian Assembly

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING AND EVANGELISM EXPLOSION

Pastor Brian said in one of his weekly updates, "When God led us to spend 21 days in prayer and fasting, we believed He was preparing us to be used in a powerful way in His harvest." As a result, we were not surprised that our goal of 25 participants for Saturday's Evangelism Explosion workshop was exceeded. However, we were surprised that the goal was more than doubled; that 57 individuals participated in the training. Praise the Lord for your interest and participation in this workshop.

After the workshop, several individuals went sharing the gospel in the neighborhood and we are praising the Lord for two individuals who prayed to receive Christ as Savior. Jesus said, "The fields are already

Continues on page 2.

COMMENDATION

Raphael and Velda Thomas were commended to full-time Christian ministry in 1992 by the Annotto Bay Gospel Chapel in association with the North-Eastern Missionary Conference (a fellowship of 33 Christian Brethren Assemblies in Jamaica) and have been faithfully serving the Lord in the ministry since then. In 2020, sensing that the

Lord was leading them to strategically position themselves to fulfill a call to a more global ministry, they relocated to the United States.

The Lord led them to the city of Philadelphia and into the membership and fellowship of Germantown Christian Assembly.

Continues on page 2.

The Purpose of this Newsletter

This ministry newsletter is intended to support the vision of the church—to be Christ-centered, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to build lives that glorify and worship God by emphasizing the Word, Evangelism, Discipleship and Caring for the whole man. We hope this newsletter will play an important role in encouraging the members of our assembly to fearlessly stand closer together, for the cause of the gospel of Christ.



GCA Reflections is published quarterly for the members and friends of GCA.

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in each of the articles herein are those of each individual author or contributor and not necessarily those held by the GCA Reflections Staff or GCA leadership.

Each issue will be available on the GCA website under "News & Events".

A special thank you to all who contributed to this issue of GCA Reflections.



Continued from page 1.

Bro. Raphael currently sits with the Elders and serves as the Director of Missions and Evangelism at GCA. Sis. Velda serves in various ministries.

On November 29, 2020, GCA recommissioned Dr. Raphael Thomas and his wife Sis. Velda as missionaries in the United States. This extends their full-time service to include the United States and North America and will allow them to be recognized as **accredited missionaries** in North America. Please pray that the Lord will continue to use them to expand His kingdom. ✧

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING AND EVANGELISM EXPLOSION

Continued from page 1.

ripe for harvest," (John 4:35 NLT) so we must each seize the opportunity to work in God's great harvest field.

Brother Raphael noted that Saturday was a testimony of the Hand of the Lord with us. The national director as well as the regional director of Evangelism Explosion were there, and a number of contacts were made in the

neighborhood. There were seven full presentations of the gospel; the beginning of greater things to come. We want to saturate the neighborhood with the Good News. God is working His will among us. We thank all who made it possible, including the Missions Committee, and we give God all the glory! ✧



Continued from page 5.

From Sister Cindy —

The Letter – Pathway God Made to Witness

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV

What an awesome reminder! In fact, recently my own personal experience of God's divine presence came shortly after GCA's 21 days of fasting and prayer. Essentially, about four months ago, I received one of two letters in the mail from a complete stranger. It was my intent to respond to the letter, however, I procrastinated and never got around to it. Regardless, both letters were clear attempts to proselytize Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings.

Unlike the first letter, the second one included two telephone numbers for me to call with any questions regarding their suggested scriptures and a Watchtower publication. There were two captivating things about the second letter – the timing of the letter and the open door God had set in place for witnessing to an unbeliever. The second letter was delivered on the same day as GCA's Evangelism Explosion workshop, of which I attended virtually. Although I was unable to physically go out with the evangelism team to witness, about the same time the team proceeded into the community, I sensed the Lord leading me to call the writer of the letters.

Preceded by prayer, I reached for my telephone, trusting this unknown territory to our Known God. I would soon discover that the Lord had prepared and paved the way...as promised. Sometimes God sends people our way who are ripe for the harvest and in my case it was by way of a letter – a letter that evoked a mere phone call. I reached the person who wrote the letter and discovered she has been a Jehovah's Witness for 33 years. Yet, she was very receptive to my call – allowing me to do all the talking, using the strategy and approach spoken of during the Evangelism Explosion workshop. While quite different from their doctrine, I shared the truth of God's salvation plan for mankind's redemption through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Surprisingly, she listened with little resistance. Two of her sons are elders and she was on the phone with one of them when I called the second time. She did not answer her phone when I called the third time, nor did she call me back, as a result; I had some concerns that one of her sons or the elders from her assembly had advised her against any further communication with me.

Although she has not yet converted, I have spoken to her three times since that first call and will be following up with her further, at her request. Each time we spoke, she showed an uncanny eagerness to hear more. Clearly, she has doubts about what she has been taught.

Regardless of how things appear to us, the Lord's power can emerge in a spectacular way and He is able to be magnified! Certainly, God is working in her life, as well as mine, and desires to welcome her into His Kingdom – A Kingdom far greater than the kingdom hall. *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" 2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) ✧*



For Your *Health* **Diabetes Mellitus**

By Margaret Aitcheson

Diabetes is a disease in which the blood glucose or blood sugar levels are too high; above what is normal. Type 1 usually occurs in childhood or adolescents. Type 2 is more common and tends to develop as we get older. Prediabetes is present when the blood sugar is high but not high enough to be classified as Type 2 Diabetes. Gestational Diabetes occurs in pregnancy.

Normally an organ, the pancreas, releases insulin into the bloodstream to help the body store and use sugar and fat from the foods you eat. When the pancreas produces little or no insulin, or when the body does not respond appropriately to insulin, the level of the blood sugar rises and diabetes occurs.

Symptoms include increased thirst, frequent urination, hunger, fatigue, irritability, blurred vision, slow healing of sores and wounds. See your doctor if you believe you or your child has diabetes, If you are diagnosed with diabetes, you need a close medical follow-up and possibly medication to keep your blood sugar normal.

Excess blood sugar can cause many complications: cardiovascular disease including heart attack and strokes; nerve damage causing tingling; numbness and loss of feelings in the limbs; eye damage leading to blindness; skin problems, infections and hearing damage.

Prevention includes eating healthy foods low in fat and calories, and high fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Also, more physical activities such as aerobic exercises (about 150 minutes per week is recommended); and losing excess weight. **There is no cure for diabetes.** You must manage it well to stay healthy. ✧

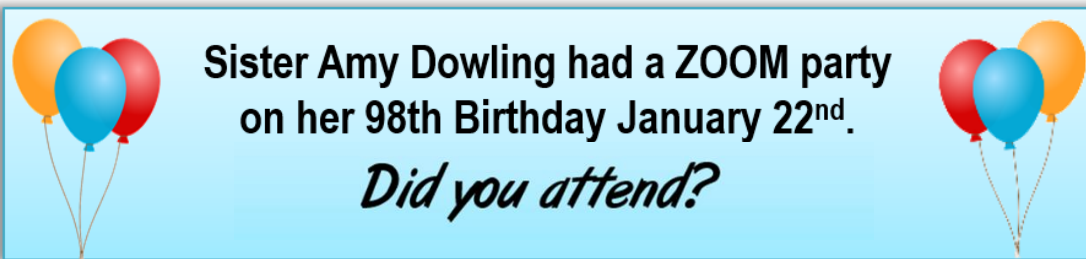


The McKenies Family Journey to GCA Membership

We attended an open brethren church in northeast Philadelphia for a total of 17 years (2003 - 2020). As a family, we got saved in 2008 and remained members for 12 years. We attended faithfully and we enjoyed fellowship with other members as well as being active in some of the ministries. During those years, we received invitations from our relatives Clive and Brenda, long time members of GCA, to various events like the Christmas celebrations, different performances, and a couple of church outings like the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir Christmas performance in New York. We thoroughly enjoyed these visits to GCA and we began to be introduced to different members of the church. Everyone we met during those visits was always very kind and friendly.

In the last two years, we started noticing that we were not feeling as fulfilled in the Word being preached due to contradictory practices, questionable financial decisions, promotion of elders without membership input or vote, and secrecy with regards to church issues or decisions that directly affected the membership. We prayed about it and continued to ask God's guidance on what to do. During the church closure due to COVID-19, we continued to ask for God's help and guidance. We started feeling the stirring of God in our hearts that it was time to make a change, but where should we go and how will we know that it is the right place according to God's leading? We remembered the warmth, kindness, and friendliness of GCA and inquired about attending services in September 2020. We attended three services and felt confident that the Lord was leading us to seek information about how to become members of GCA. Once that unanimous family decision was made, we got in touch with our previous church and we had a loving discussion about our decision to leave that membership to join GCA. They were very understanding and wished us the best; we wished them the same. We have maintained a great relationship with our former church family.

As it so happened, the GCA budget meeting was scheduled and we asked if we could attend virtually. The answer was YES! We were very happy to hear about all the progress the church made for the year and we were especially impressed with the way GCA conducted its financial responsibilities. We appreciated the openness and transparency and that the members were encouraged to be a part of the decision-making process. We moved forward by speaking with Pastor Brian and Elder Peters about membership. In October, we began a new members class via ZOOM. We learned so much and had the opportunity to fellowship with Pastor Brian and Elder George. We were humbled by their willingness to answer any questions and the way they explained the history and values of GCA. WE PASSED!! We are now proud members of the GCA family, and we look forward to the future with this church family. We thank God for leading us to GCA! ✧





By Juanita Washington

As I recall, it has been several years since we went out as a group from GCA during the Christmas season to do caroling in the community around the church. The idea came about as we were thinking of what we could do to spread some cheer for Christmas during this time of the pandemic.

We created postcards which members of the office staff delivered to homes on several streets around the church. The postcards informed them of the date and time we would be singing in the neighborhood and asked them to call the church office if they would like us to sing in front of their house. We received three requests.

Christmas Eve Variety Program

The Christmas Eve Service, “*The Cost of Christmas*” included a lot of good GCA talent of various ages in various settings. Dr. Darryl Brown emceed the program virtually (of course).

Gail Morrison-Longmore led six boys of the King’s Kids in the song “It’s All About the Cross.” The masked *Young Adults* sang carols with drum and guitar accompaniment. Young actors shared the Christmas story from the eyes of children! *Songs of the Season* were given by Dr. Christopher Wheeler, pianist. A video shared what people on the street thought about Christmas; Pastor Brian shared the devotional. It was a nice production and a great blessing, a very well-orchestrated presentation. The photography was great. Those behind the camera(s) must have had a good time! Thanks to all for a blessed service. ✧



At 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 22nd, ten of us departed from the Mission House with a guitar, a djembe drum (tall African drum) and a tambourine. Stepping over piles of snow as we walked along Crittenden Street, we came upon a large group of people (at least 20) who expressed their appreciation for what we were doing; some even joined us briefly in singing! As we moved along, folks came out of their homes to hear and thank us. Motorists paused to cheer us on. After about an hour, we returned to the Mission House and had fellowship with much more music, singing, hot chocolate and cookies.

We were very encouraged when the office received a call the following day from one of the neighbors thanking us for what we did. She told of her neighbor who had been convalescing at home for several years and we were able to be a blessing to that family. We had no idea that this simple act would be so much fun for us and so impactful to the neighbors.

May God continue to use GCA as the “lighthouse” and each of us as members, the “harbor light” in the community. This will allow us to achieve our goal to “make Christ known.” ✧



Testimonies follow from Lorita (Rita) Grant and Cinderella (Cindy) Watson:

From Sister Rita —

When the Elders announced the church would participate in 21 days of prayer and fasting, I felt led to participate. I had never fasted, so I was looking forward to seeing how the Lord would work in my life. The Lord revealed many things to me during these 21 days.

Let’s start from the beginning. Nick was asked to lead the 3:00 am prayer time on New Year’s day. As a typical ‘silent prayer warrior’ on the prayer line, I promised to join him and pray out loud to make sure he would stay awake.

First revelation, my initial decision not to pray out loud was more than me just choosing not to pray, I realized I was afraid to pray. After further examination, I realized my pride was getting in the way because I was more worried about what others thought, than talking to God. Praise God, I prayed a few times out loud during those 21 days.

Second revelation, fasting really does intensify prayer. With the Lord’s help, my appetite for meat was replaced with a hunger for more time with God. Don’t get me wrong, some days were a struggle, but I was praying more often AND my prayers were more fervent!

Third revelation, I really needed to join corporate prayer more consistently. During the 21 days, I was not able to join every day, but multiple

times a week, I would join with the intention of staying on for 15 minutes. Once I got on, I would throw away my ‘to do list’ and would usually stay on for the full duration of the prayer time. It was such an intimate time together and I felt much closer to my church family and God. Now I know how to pray for my church family more specifically.

I had several other revelations. To summarize, when prayer was my first priority, I could hear the Lord’s voice more clearly. For example, He told me to attend the Evangelism Explosion; even though I was on the fence about attending. I also spent much more of my prayer time worshipping God first and foremost, seeking His face before seeking His hand. Finally, I was put to the test after the 21 days were over when our pastor asked me to share a testimony on ZOOM. Once again, I was faced with my pride and had to decide whether I should share my secret about being afraid to pray out loud OR leave that part out and make myself look good. I was reminded of a verse I taught my kids, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’ (John 3:30 NKJV). Thank you GCA Elders for seeking God for direction and leading us in this time of 21 days of prayer and fasting. It has been a game changer in my prayer life and a wonderful way to bring in the New Year.

Sister Cindy’s testimony begins on page 7.

