

# CHRISTMAS JOY

HEARTLAND AMERICA CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY  
DECEMBER 2014

## Join The Joy!

Wayne Pense,  
Heartland America Regional Overseer

*“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of **great joy**, which shall be to all people.”*

Luke 2:10

Who would have guessed? Who could have even thought this could happen on a night just like every other night? But, it wasn't like every other night. What took place that night would change everything, and I mean everything would change.

It's not that the coming of the Messiah had not been discussed. It had been a major topic of discussion for many years. But, for it to happen this way? Probably not. In fact, full revelation of what took place would be many years in coming. In fact, that little one who was born in a stable, and laid in the manger would die on a cross someday with people still unclear about what the Angels sang about.

I have rehearsed the story over in my mind many times over the years. I would say my parents, and my spiritual parents (my church), did a

pretty good job in keeping the story fresh and alive for me. They read it to me. I read it, and I saw it acted out in the Christmas plays.

I am quite sure the shepherds didn't catch the meaning of most of what was being communicated. Put yourself in their place. Angels appeared. For most of us, “case closed!” Would we have heard what they said, I mean really hear?

I do not have sufficient space to explore all that was said that evening. I'm going to focus in on one small term. Did I say small? The word in particular is JOY. *“...I bring you good tidings of great joy...”*

I dare say, on that evening, the only beings that could appreciate the real message were dwellers of the heavenly. I have wondered in

## Regional Events

- Dec 25 - Christmas!
- Jan 2-4 - KS/MO Winter Retreat
- Jan 10 - OK Children's Training
- Jan 10 - OK S.H.A.R.E
- Feb 6-8 - Regional Couples Retreat
- March 21 - MO Children's Training
- March 21 - MO S.H.A.R.E.
- April 24-26 - AR Women's Retreat
- TBA - KS/MO Women's Retreat
- May 2 - AR Children's Training
- May 2 - AR S.H.A.R.E
- TBA - KS Children's Training
- TBA - KS S.H.A.R.E

... Continued From Page 1

time past, if the Heavenly Father told the Angels the whole story of what was happening, and what would happen after the birth of Christ. Did the Father speak of the life and death of Jesus to those that dwelt with Him? If our Heavenly Father did tell them, then they knew about the joy.

We should understand that it was not just the birth of the Child that the Angels sang about. I have some appreciation for what it means when a little one takes that first breath into it's lungs, and exhales for the first time. It's joyful. It's amazing. To hold a little one, so helpless, so dependent, has to be experienced to understand the emotion. The young mother, and faithful father most certainly experienced that emotion, the joy of the arrival of their son.

Joy was the emotion of the Wise Men that went to King Herod seeking another King. I have to say here that their joy was something different. Perhaps it was the joy of anticipation. Or, it could have been the joy of intrigue of something mystical.

*“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” (Matt. 2:10)*

It must have been a joyful experience for those Wise Men who had followed the star to find Him. I have dreamed also of what that sight really must have been. It was a star, but something made it different to them, and for them. Did it hover low over the

spot where Jesus was? Was there a beam of light that showed them the way? Those answers will have to come another time.

They, most likely, enjoyed giving their gifts to the Child. We all know, or should know, how joyful it makes you feel to give a gift to someone without any motive other than just to give it. I am sure that when they laid their gifts down, they felt that joy, with little understanding of the significance of those gifts.

These valuable items were standard gifts to honor a King or deity in the ancient world: gold as a precious metal, frankincense as perfume or incense, and myrrh as anointing oil. The Book of Isaiah, when describing Jerusalem's glorious restoration, tells of nations and Kings who will come and *“bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord”* (Isaiah 60:6). Although Matthew's gospel does not include the names or number of the Magi, many believe that the number of the gifts is what led to the tradition of the Three Wise Men.

In addition to the honor and status implied by the value of the gifts of the Magi, scholars think that these three were chosen for their special spiritual symbolism about Jesus himself—gold representing his kingship, frankincense a symbol of his priestly role, and myrrh a prefiguring of his death and embalming—an interpretation made popular in the well-known Christmas carol *“We Three Kings.”*

Continued On Page 3



*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*John 3:16*

...Continued From Page 2

There are many references to joy in the New Testament. I would suggest that you do a search sometime in a concordance, or on your computer Bible. As you run through those references, you too, should be able to identify with what was going on at the time in the lives of those experiencing the emotion of joy.

Let's travel back to our original thought and scripture. I do not want to "read into" this verse something that is not there. But, there is a truth to be seen in this verse, ***"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."*** (Luke 2:10)

I believe that there were only a few who knew what the joy of the moment really was. I would suggest that the Heavenly Father was thinking far beyond that manger scene, as He looked down that night and saw it all, from beginning to the end. He most certainly witnessed the birth of His son. He watched Jesus grow from childhood into a man. He confirmed the identify of the Lord that day as John baptized Him. He also watched as the curtain of life would seem to close on Jesus.

***"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."***  
(Luke 2:10)

His Son would pay the ultimate price so you and I, could know the true joy of having the peace of God reign in our hearts. I believe the writer of Hebrews revealed the truth about the JOY spoken of by the angels in their message to the shepherds. ***"... Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the***

***joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame..."*** (Hebrews 12:2)

I believe this is exactly what the angels were singing about. The Gospel all comes down to this point of focus. ***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*** (John 3:16)

Can we join in the Joy? As we celebrate Christmas this year, could we take the time to JOIN THE JOY! Share the heart of the Father! Share Jesus with your loved ones. **JESUS REALLY IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!**

***"... Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame..."***

(Hebrews 12:2 )

Heartland America

## 2015 REGIONAL COUPLE'S RETREAT

Hilton Convention Center Hotel Branson, Missouri (Across from Branson Landing)

**Hotel Room:** \$105 + Tax per night

**Retreat Cost:** \$130 (Paper Form)  
\$135 (Online Registration)



**Hotel Reservations:**

417-243-3467 (Group HAC)

**Retreat Registration:**

[www.heartlandcogop.org](http://www.heartlandcogop.org)

**We fully expect our room block to fill up quickly. So, DON'T DELAY!** We do not control the sleeping room assignments. The King Deluxe Rooms are on a first-come-first-serve basis. We are hoping they will open up more deluxe rooms if we hurry and get our room block filled by January 8.

### Here's the steps:

- 1) Register with the Regional Office via regular mail Registration, or Online Registration. We will accept a \$50 deposit per couple to hold your place. The balance will be due upon arrival.
- 2) Reserve your room at the hotel by calling: **417-243-3467 (Cindy)**. M-F 8-4:30 PM.  
Identify yourself as being a part of the Heartland Church Group. Give them our **Group Code: HAC**

**Cut-Off date for hotel room reservation January 8. Rooms given after that date will be on an "as available" basis.**

**The Young Harvest**  
**Oklahoma Children's Ministry**  
**Training Intensive**

We are pleased to welcome our  
**International Children's**  
**Ministry Director,**  
**Kathy Creasy & her staff to the**  
**Heartland America Region!**



**Who ?** Children's Ministry Pastors & Leaders , AND all Oklahoma Pastors who will experience some specialized training in the area of Children's Ministry. There will be a special **S.H.A.R.E. Session for the Oklahoma Pastors** also. (Note: We are bringing this training to each of our states. Anyone is welcome from around the region that would like to participate in any of these training events.

\* **When ?** Sat, January 10, 2015

\* **Where?** Hope Church, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Register Online:

[www.heartlandcogop.org](http://www.heartlandcogop.org)

**Calling all the Messengers!**

KANSAS/MISSOURI

**Winter Retreat 2015**

January 2-4

Cross Pointe Campground

Ages 13 & up

\$70 Tuition

Visit [www.heartlandcogop.org](http://www.heartlandcogop.org) for more information.

Contact Mykala Shaver

[mykala.shaver@heartlandcogop.org](mailto:mykala.shaver@heartlandcogop.org)

**Greetings from Camp Kahoka! The 2014 Arkansas Winter Retreat, "Do Something", is in the history books.** What a great time of fellowship and ministry. We were blessed to have Kirk Rising visiting and speaking to our youth. Our theme was taken from Colossians 3:23 which says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." Our focus was that in everything we do, we have to make a choice; we have to "DO SOMETHING". Whether it is choosing your favorite ice cream or the ultimate choice to serve the Lord, we have to make a decision. In this day and age, there is urgency for us to equip our youth with the knowledge that they are in charge of their destiny. It is their choices that will determine where they spend eternity. Scripture in Matthew states that there is a broad and narrow path, and that only few will find the narrow path. We have to direct them and lead them so that making these tough choices is easier. God was so good to us and blessed us beyond measure. We look forward to the summer for more time at Camp Kahoka!

-Jason and LaCinda Whittington



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

*Wayne Pense*  
 Regional Overseer

*Adana Pense*  
 Office Secretary

*Karron Stone*  
 Office Manager

*Pat Fisher*  
 Office Treasurer

Faith makes all things possible,  
 Hope makes all things work,  
 Love makes all things beautiful,  
 May you have all three for this  
 Christmas.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**