

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY'S WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
December 27 in the year of our Lord 2017- #722 the week of Christmas

Listening For His Voice

My fifth grandchild, Jaxsen Matthew Dentler was born last Thursday. He needed to stay in the hospital a little longer than usual because of some fluid in his lungs and some trouble breathing without extra oxygen. He's doing better now and came home yesterday. Last night as I sat holding him Cathy noticed how his dark eyes looked at me. I think my husky male voice may be the first male voice he's really heard. When I talk to him it is as though he's really listening. His eyes follow the sound of my voice. *"Pap's got something to say to you Jaxsen boy, listen...."*

Christmas Eve worship for Bermudian Church of the Brethren includes three services these days ... one at Bermudian and two at historic Altland Meeting House. All are well attended. I've always been a bit sentimental about Christmas Eve worship. To me there is a sense of the mystery & majesty of God in the air as we gather on that Silent Night. Perhaps it is because of all we've added to our celebration of Christmas. Oh, don't get me wrong, I'm not whining or complaining about Christmas busyness! I love the parties and the concerts, the special events, and I even love the shopping. I love picking and hunting for the perfect gifts for my dear ones. But with all we've adorned Christmas with it does get a bit hectic. And for the pastor of an active, busy church ... the season of Advent & Christmas can get to be a bit of a blur!

But then Christmas Eve! Everything seems to s-l-o-w down. There is a peace in the air. And as my brothers & sisters gather you can read the joy in their faces. Handshakes & hugs. Wide-eyed children. Weary parents. Young & old. We gather to hear the Christmas Scriptures one more time ... to sing the beloved carols ... and to light candles as we sing *"Silent Night."* Ahhhh ... there really is something about Christmas Eve. And I love that on this night we have the privilege to share the love of Christ with folks we don't often see. In all 3 of our services ... but especially at Altland ... the room is filled with faces that aren't as familiar. Many of them know me ... from years of attending Christmas Eve at Altland ... they greet me with warm smiles and hugs. This service means something ... something special ... to them. And I have the amazing privilege to stand up and speak the truth of Christ into these hearts ... that are truly listening! Even in the dim light of Christmas Eve ... I can see the eyes following my voice. *"Pastor Larry has got something to say to you from your God dear friend, listen...."*

I would have liked to have been there on Christmas Day 1795 when the deed for the Altland Meeting House property was signed on the wild frontier on the west side of the Susquehanna River. Were they listening for God's voice?

I would have liked to have been there in 1853 when the first worship service was held in the present brick meeting house. Were they listening for God's voice?

And oh how I would have liked to been there on Christmas Eve 1981 when after a year long restoration process spurred on by our Bermudian Youth ... the congregation and community gathered for that first Christmas Eve worship in the restored meeting house. Pastor Georgia Markey welcomed folks. Sister Tina (Spangler) Gleim who had chaired the restoration committee said a few words. Harold & Lois Breneman and Pastor Dallas & Mary Lehman shared special music. Brother Glenn Julius & Pastor Dallas Lehman each shared messages. And of course the evening ended with candle lighting and "*Silent Night*." I've heard many beloved memories of that night. Were they listening for God's voice?

But you see ... the listening ... the quieting ourselves before our God ... shouldn't be a one-night-a-year thing! Just as Jaxsen follows the sound of the deep voice of his Pap ... let us all listen carefully ... to the Scriptures ... in times of prayer ... to daily devotionals, Sunday School & Bible Study lessons, to sermons and hymns ... and especially as the calendar turns for a new year. Let us make it our new or renewed commitment ... it may take some new discipline ... you may have to be intentional about finding the quiet space to truly listen ... God has something to say to you His dear children ... are you listening?

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 NIV

Listening for God! And speaking to Jaxsen! Pastor Larry <><