



ADVENTURE JOURNAL

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Living the Adventure Ministries seeks to work for the transformation of the world through the awakening of the Church, evangelistic preaching, and Christian people putting their faith into action through mission experiences around the world.

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Focused on Today

Life is filled with transition and change. In 2023, you may have experienced a new job or started retirement; experienced the death of someone near to you or the birth of a new member of the family; gained weight or lost weight; said words you wish you could take back or said words that were profound and life giving. No matter your place on this spectrum, we believe in a God who is with us in our celebrations, our times of grief, and in our need for forgiveness and grace. It would be easy for us to focus on the struggles, losses, and mistakes of the past year, or we can look toward the new year with the hope and expectation of God's newness coming into our lives.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" We also read in Isaiah 43:18-19, "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." The New Year is an opportunity for us to experience new opportunities and experience the newness God brings into our lives as we daily surrender to Jesus.

When we spend our time living in the old of yesterday, we find ourselves weighted down with struggles of the past or holding so tightly to the celebrations that we miss out on the new experiences God has in front of us. As we embark on 2024, I want to encourage us to live in the way Paul describes in Philippians 3:13b-14, "But this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

I pray 2024 will be a year of blessing, hope, and new life for you and your family. I pray the struggles of yesterday will not blind you to the abundant life offered to you in 2024. I pray you will grow in your walk with Jesus, moving into greater understanding and maturity. Happy New Year!

Night of Prayer and Praise

When life seems overwhelming, out of order, and frustrating, it is easy for us to seek more control over our lives. We want to change the situation and will often become more self-focused trying to change ourselves or the people around us, instead of diving deeper into our relationship with Jesus. The invitation is for us to surrender our lives so we can follow Jesus into true peace, a clearer vision for our lives, and the transformation He desires to work in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Join us for a Night of Prayer and Praise where we focus our attention away from the problems of this world, as we respond to Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." As we surrender to Jesus our need to control our lives and the problems surrounding us, we find exactly what we need: Rest. This year's Night of Prayer and Praise will be at three different locations:

- January 21 @ Christ United Church in Xenia, IL
- January 24 @ Carmi Emmanuel in Carmi, IL
- January 28 @ Albion First UMC, Albion, IL

Each evening will feature 90-minutes of singing, praying, and seeking the Lord. Joyful Noise will lead our worship times, while I will invite us into focused prayer times. Each evening will begin at 6pm. Everyone is welcome and there is no cost for this event. A free-will offering will be received each evening. If you have questions about the Night of Prayer and Praise, contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

*Merry Christmas from
Living the Adventure Ministries
&
The Henson Family*

Ministry in Argentina and Uruguay

Prior to the international travel restrictions tied to the Covid Pandemic, the United Christian Ashrams International Ministry embarked on forming new Christian Ashram experiences in Argentina. A former missionary to Argentina, Doug Ruffle, was leading this expansion of the Christian Ashram ministry. Out of the Argentina Christian Ashram, the Vice-President of the Uruguayan Methodist Church formed a Christian Ashram experience in Uruguay. This summer, Brother Adriano Frattini, Vice President of the Uruguayan Church, invited Brother Doug Ruffle to attend a Christian Ashram in November. At our annual meeting of the United Christian Ashrams International Ministry, Brother Doug and I decided to travel together to Uruguay and then on to Argentina.

Brother Doug and I traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay on November 8 where we had the opportunity to meet with the President of the Methodist Church in Uruguay and to visit several ministry locations where the church is focused on ministry to homeless people and to a community near Montevideo (*Comunidad Sembradores*) that is known for violence and drug use. God is using these ministries to reach people who are struggling in life. They shared the story of one family who was able to leave the life of drug addiction, find employment, and move to a safer area in Montevideo. The family continues to return to the church in *Comunidad Sembradores* in hopes of seeing transformation and new life for their former neighbors.

The Christian Ashram was a fabulous success. We then traveled to Buenos Aires, where we met with the Bishop of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina. Through our conversation and encouragement, we established a date for a 2024 Christian Ashram and began a conversation about training opportunities where we may partner in the future.

Thank you for your prayers as Doug and I traveled. We returned home on November 14.

Microcredit Opportunity

During my trip to Malawi, I visited a rural village where a church community has been created. In my conversation with the church leaders, we determined a need for beginning a Microcredit ministry to help women and men start new businesses or to start farming. I made a commitment with the local pastor to provide a minimum of \$500, but no more than \$1,000 to start the Microcredit. I have three \$100 commitments already made, so I need at least two more people to make a \$100 contribution. If you would like to participate in the Microcredit ministry or to know more about this opportunity, contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Family News

Judah and Micah are wrapping up their first semester at their respective universities. Isaiah and Sarafina are wrapping up their first semester, as well. They are learning a lot, and we are proud of their accomplishments.

Micah was recently hired by The Sporting Times in Central Kentucky to be a sports commentator and camera operator. He also was hired to be the Studio and Equipment Room Manager in the Broadcasting Department at Western Kentucky University.

Judah was recently selected to be the percussionist for the USI Jazz Band along with his continued participation in the Chamber Choir. They recently completed their Madrigal Feaste which was an amazing performance. He created percussion accompaniments for two of the songs.

Elijah is entering his third "Busy Season" in his accounting career. Please keep him in your prayers as he travels weekly to a client outside of Missouri.

Nancy will be undergoing a surgical procedure on December 20. Please keep her in your prayers. Her recovery will take four to six weeks.

Invest in Kingdom Work

You are making a difference around the world through your continued support of Living the Adventure Ministries. The Good News of the Kingdom of God is being proclaimed through this ministry as Matt travels throughout the United States and around the world. We are always amazed where God opens doors for Living the Adventure Ministries. We are excited with the ways we have been in ministry to the whole person: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational. We believe a holistic ministry can hold in tension proclamation and mission where we not only tell people about Jesus, but we become the hands and feet of Jesus.

As we come to the end of 2023, we want to invite you to make an end-of-the-year investment into this ministry. Your contributions will help us end the year financially strong and propel us into ministry in 2024. We are prayerfully considering ministry opportunities in Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and Asia, along with places around the United States. We continue to support ongoing ministry in Haiti and pray for the day we will be able to return. You can make a contribution in the following ways:

- Use the reply envelope provided with this letter to send a check made payable to: LTA.
- Make an online one-time or recurring gift on our website: www.livingtheadventure.net and click on "Donate Now."
- Contact our Treasurer, Brad Henson, to discuss an estate gift or a tax-free distribution from your retirement account (call or text 618-214-5510 or email: brad@livingtheadventure.net)

Upcoming Events

We are working on scheduling events for 2024. Contact us to plan an event.

January 21 Night of Prayer and Praise—Xenia, IL
January 24 Night of Prayer and Praise—Carmi, IL
January 28 Night of Prayer and Praise—Albion, IL
Feb. 2-3 Teach Course of Study Evangelism Class
Feb. 16-19 California Winter Christian Ashram

Christmas Store Open

We are excited to share our Christmas Store is open at Herschel Johnson Implement (652 IL Route 15, Albion). The store features unique artisan gifts made in Haiti. We have a wide variety of metal art hand made from 55-gallon drums. There are hand made bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. The sale of these gifts support Haitian artisans and Living the Adventure's mission ministry. Check out some of the items on our Facebook page.