



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.

Connect to Living the Adventure Ministries

Matt Henson, Lead Evangelist & Executive Director

Facebook: facebook.com/livingtheadventure

Website: livingtheadventure.net

Email: matt@livingtheadventure.net Phone: 618-830-6670

Advent Light

In April of this year, people gathered in places where the solar eclipse would have the longest period of darkness. The community where I live was one of those places where we would experience over four minutes of totality as the moon covered the sun. People came from places around the nation to participate in this rare occurrence. People waited for the moment when we would move from a sunlit day to a strange darkness in the middle of the day. When the moment of totality came to pass, there was a quietness in our community that was quickly broken with cheers from people gathered on our town square.

The astronomical event was noteworthy and I am glad I participated with my family in experiencing the amazing shift from light to dark in the middle of the day. Yet, as we enter the Advent season, I am intrigued at how people came from far and wide to experience the totality of the solar eclipse which brought darkness, while our Advent experience is waiting for the light. Zechariah in his prophetic words after John the Baptist was born said, *"Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace"* (Luke 1:78-79).

When John the Baptist was born, his father was not pointing to his son as the main character but was pointing the people to the light that would soon be dawning in the baby born in Bethlehem. In the story of the angels proclaiming to the shepherds while they were out tending their flocks by night, the shepherds decide to go to Bethlehem to see this thing that has happened. Then, when Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple at the time of purification, Simeon, who has waited to see the Messiah, proclaims in speaking about Jesus, *"a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."*

During the Advent and Christmas season, we celebrate the coming of the Light. In the present struggles in our world where it seems as though darkness prevails, we know we have the Light who dispels the darkness. We know Jesus is the one who can break through the darkness of evil, division, and hopelessness. John writes, *"The Word gave*

life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1:4-5). The Light we celebrate coming is the one who brings Life. The darkness of death no longer has dominion in our lives, as Jesus will break the power of sin and bring us life abundantly.

Where is there darkness in your world today? Do you have the hope of Jesus being the Light to dispel that darkness? How can we pray for the Light, while also proclaiming the Light who has come? Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount teaching, tells us, *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father"* (Matthew 5:14-16).

It is my prayer that we will seek and receive the Light that dispels our present darkness in this Advent season. As we receive the Light, we will then live our lives in such a way to dispel darkness around us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being the Light that banishes darkness. There is a lot of darkness in our world today and you have called us to be light amid the darkness. Give us strength to be the light through our words and our actions in this Advent and Christmas season. Amen.

Night of Prayer and Praise

We have secured two of our locations for the Nights of Prayer and Praise. We are working to finalize the other location. We will be at Xenia Christ United Church on Sunday, January 12 at 6pm, and at Carmi First UMC on Wednesday, January 29 at 6pm. We are working on the location for Sunday, February 2. Each Night of Prayer and Praise will feature singing, praying, and experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Make plans now to attend. I will share the dates and locations on our Facebook Page: Living the Adventure Ministries.

Malawi Dates Established

Thank you to each person who made an investment in our microcredit ministry. You helped us exceed our goal. The money has been sent to Malawi and the funds will be distributed soon. Thank you for your generosity.

As we look to 2025, we are planning a trip to Malawi on April 21-May 3. We will travel to our microcredit ministry sites where we will receive reports, preach, teach, and assist in vision-casting for expanding our microcredit ministry. We will also lead a Christian Ashram. We are working with our ministry partners to plan other activities for while we are in Malawi. We are looking for people to travel with us. If you have a passion to raise up spiritual leaders, engage in evangelism and discipleship, and work alongside people in the villages to bring basic necessities to their community, you should consider joining me. The cost is being finalized. I would enjoy having a couple people travel with me as we continue to expand our ministry outreach in Africa.

Christmas Gift Ideas

I tend to procrastinate purchasing Christmas gifts each year. It is not that I don't want to buy gifts for the people who mean so much to me, it is that I overthink purchasing presents. I always wait for the better deal or the better idea. I want to buy something special, while trying to stay practical. This brings a lot of indecisiveness to my Christmas shopping.

If you have similar experiences, I want to provide you a few gift ideas for this Christmas season that are meaningful, practical, and helpful.

Books I Recommend (Each can be found on Amazon)

- *The Christ of the Indian Road* by E. Stanley Jones. 2025 will be the 100th Anniversary of this book being published. It is a wonderful book about contextualizing ministry to the cultures in which we work. Filled with E. Stanley Jones' experiences in India and how the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of people, this is a fantastic book.
- *How To Be a Transformed Person* by E. Stanley Jones is a year-long devotion book that I have been reading in 2024. If you are looking for a good devotion for 2025, I recommend you pick up this book.

Jewelry and Art

- We continue to sell items made by Haitian artisans. We have nativity sets, ornaments, garden stakes, bracelets, earrings, etc. Each of these items are located at my office at Herschel Johnson Implement (652 Illinois Route 15, Albion, IL).

Desperation

The situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate. One month ago, a Spirit Airlines plane was shot as it was preparing to land in Port-au-Prince. The bullet penetrated the plane and hit a luggage compartment above a row of seats in

the plane. The plane diverted to the Dominican Republic and the Port-au-Prince airport was shut-down. The FAA grounded all flights from the US who would travel below 10,000 feet in Haitian Airspace for a period of 30-days.

On December 11, the FAA made the decision to ground all flights to Haiti until March 2025. This decision creates issues as supplies from the US, including mission flights and packages cannot fly to Haiti. In an environment where the gangs have become more violent, and food insecurity and the lack of necessary supplies has grown, the people will become more desperate.

I am in contact with David Draeger, an American living at the Guest House in Petionville, Haiti. He gives me updates about the present conditions and recently reported over 200 people were killed by gangs over a few days. The death toll in 2024 has risen past 5,000. David is safe at the Guest House. He is experiencing a lot of physical and emotional struggles as the destruction, death, and fighting happening nearby are constant reminders of his powerlessness to bring about peace.

Please continue to pray for David, Bishop Dorcelly, our mission partners in Haiti, and the people of Haiti. Pray for peace in the midst of this ongoing conflict.

End-Of-The-Year Partnership

Thank you to each person who has supported Living the Adventure Ministries in the past year. We are grateful for your commitment to help proclaim the Kingdom of God around the world and to support our expanding ministry opportunities. As we come to the end-of-the-year, we ask that you help us end the year strong and propel us into ministry in 2025 by making an end-of-the-year contribution. You can contribute online on our website (<https://bit.ly/3EQDCUp>) or by sending a check to our office (203 N 2nd Street, Albion, IL 62806).

Merry Christmas

&

Happy New Year!!!

As you gather with family and friends during this Advent, Christmas, and New Year's season, we pray you will experience the Truth of Christmas in Jesus Christ. May the New Year bring new opportunities and new life as you live the adventure of following Jesus. We look forward to partnering with you in 2025!

Upcoming Events

We are working on scheduling events for 2025. Contact us to plan an event.

Jan. 5 Olney First Methodist Church Pulpit Supply
Jan. 12 Night of Prayer and Praise—Xenia, IL
Jan. 17-18 LTA Board of Directors Meeting
Jan. 24-26 West Va. Wesleyan College Ashram
Jan. 29 Night of Prayer and Praise—Carmi FUMC
Feb. 2 Night of Prayer and Praise—TBA

India Trip

Join me for a wonderful trip filled with fantastic tourism and learning about other religions of the world. We will visit places like the Taj Mahal in Agra before heading to Sat Tal to join their Winter Christian Ashram experience. You will have opportunities to experience Christian fellowship with Indian brothers and sisters. The trip is September 24-October 11. Contact Matt for more information (618-830-6670 or matt@livingtheadventure.net).