

# PILGRIM NEWS & NOTES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MIDWEST PILGRIM HOLINESS CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2017



**God is at work in Noblesville!**

By Pastor John Forsee

# One Generation Shall Praise Thy Works To Another

*Psalm 145:3-4 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. KJV*

What a tremendous truth and powerful reminder! This past September we celebrated 35 years as the Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church and 25 years in our current building, to God be all the glory (***Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!***)! God has been so faithful down through the years, how could we ever think of being silent; how could we possibly not declare His greatness? So, it is with this thought in mind that I enthusiastically attempt to share what God is doing here at Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church! As I endeavor to relate what is being accomplished here, (in regards to the building program) please know, that the most thrilling and certainly of tremendous importance is the spiritual victories being won! Yes, we are very excited about this new adventure, but our greatest enthusiasm comes in seeing His kingdom advancing in the hearts and lives of individuals.

I'll never forget our first frigid February Sunday here in central Indiana, the message for that morning was so clearly given by the Blessed Holy Spirit. The title was, **A New Thing**, from ***Isaiah 43:18-21, I will do a new thing...I will even make a way...they shall shew forth my praise!*** Friends, I absolutely believe God wants to express Himself afresh and anew, to show us His way, to lead us in His path and for us to give Him all the glory! Time and space would not permit me to relate to you all of His mighty acts, the victories won, the souls saved, the backsliders reclaimed and those that have been sanctified wholly, Hallelujah! What an Awesome God we serve, what great things God is doing here at the Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church!

Well, shortly after our arrival, the board voted unanimously to build a Family Life Center (aka fellowship building). This was then presented to the church body for a vote and passed unanimously. There was a small outstanding loan that needed paid off before proceeding any further and God gloriously helped us to retire that debt quickly. My prayer, and I believe the prayer of us all, has always been that God's will be done. Yes, over these last three years we have faced some seemingly mountainous obstacles. There have been moments when it looked extremely bleak, but time and again God has proven Himself true! Just when it seemed like it wasn't going to happen, God would perform a miracle.

I had an individual tell me once, "John, you're too emotional!" I don't know, maybe I am an emotional person, but if so, I want it to be channeled for God! I want God to use it for His glory, that others may see and know the greatness of my God! Therefore, I want to declare to this "**generation**" the sovereign acts of God over these "monumental" obstacles, like...

- Obtaining a loan to assist with the financing. God gave us a much lower APR than ever anticipated! We had met with several different banks and investors and each time when it seemed that we were about to "seal the deal", some unforeseen event would happen. Yet, God's timing is always perfect and so much better than anything we could envision.
- Achieving the desired floor plan without having to install city water and sprinkler system. Avoiding these two obstacles was another huge answer to prayer, this saved us over several hundred thousand dollars. Our desire was not only to construct a building for our needs now, but large enough for future growth. So often we are so short sighted and fail to understand that God wants us to look to the future advancement of His kingdom as well.
- Securing a drainage easement. This was something that seemed almost impossible and without it we would never have been able to build. But God...don't you just love that phrase in the Bible...But God? Yes, but God...had already provided the drainage easement years ago when Reverend Phil Harris was the pastor. How often we worry over nothing.
- Procuring the needed variances. Friends, Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable! Thank God, He once again provided exactly what was needed just when it was needed.
- Maintaining our Missions giving...one of my concerns was that people would use their mission's money for the building fund, but Praise God that has not happened! We have actually increased in our annual Pilgrim Mission's

pledge over the last 3 years! You can NEVER out give God!

- Providing the new sewer line to connect the church and fellowship building to the city sewer. I thank God for people that have a vision and willingly sacrifice for the advancement of His Kingdom! The cost of the sewer line was less than half because of many who not only gave financially, but have given of their time and energy! May God richly reward them!

As I sit here this evening recalling what, “at times seemed impossible” has now become a reality, my heart rejoices in the fact that I know that this is all of God. Just south of the church this evening, what once was a beautiful grassy lawn with trees, is a space that now is cleared, leveled with stone and entrenched with a firm foundation. Surrounding the south side of our parking lot lies the steel that will soon be erected and housing our Family Life Center. Yes, it all started with people who had a vision, a vision that was given from God, a vision that now has become a reality. A vision to reach out to our community in a different way; a vision to have a place for activities and fellowship but most importantly to be used for God by God’s people.

My fellow Pilgrims, here at Noblesville, we give God all the glory! I am convinced that God is going to use this new Family Life Center for His glory in reaching lost souls. I believe that this is an opportunity to reach out to those who may never come to a church building, but will attend: a Christmas program, a Wild Game dinner, a gospel concert, a youth activity or some other event, where we will have the blessed privilege of sharing the gospel message.

I have just shared with you a little of what God has done, is doing and what I believe He will do; but I also praise Him for what He is doing and is going to do for your churches and our conference as well! I praise Him for providing the finances for a roof for my good friend, Bro. Dan Plemmons’ church there in Rochester Hills, MI. I rejoice with the Batavia Pilgrim church for their much needed, new handicap entrance ramp. I praise God for how He is working there in the outreach ministry of the Kokomo Pilgrim Holiness Church and for the things I see Him doing at the Lima church. We all have so much to praise Him for, Amen?

My wonderful brothers and sisters, may we be faithful Pilgrims to follow the Psalmist where he states...*One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.* **Psalm 145:4**

-- By Pastor John Forsee



**An artists rendition of what will be the Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Family Life Center**

## A Life Lived for Others



Mary-Lou Brown was born into a home where they never read the Bible or talked about God. She never heard anyone pray. The only Bible she ever saw was locked into her Grandmother's china cabinet.

She grew up believing that the only life you had was in this world, and she purposed to get all the happiness she could. She went to California and entered the fashion-modeling field, training with the Dorothy Farnior Modeling Agency. She spent ten years in that profession. She began to feel that she had it all together, so to speak, and that she had reached her goal in life. One day at the height of her career, as she sat at her desk in the lovely San Francisco modeling studio she found herself weeping. It surprised her to be weeping and she said within herself. "Why am I crying? I have everything I sought for: a glamorous job, a beautiful wardrobe, a nice place to live, love and romance. Why am I weeping?" She purposed to find out some answers. She took a two-week vacation and went to another part of town and rented a lovely room for two weeks to think. She didn't know how to pray. She began to think about life, wondering what it was all about. She thought, "I wonder if I ever was really happy? I wonder if anyone is really happy?"

Back in the swing of things, she continued to go to nightclubs at night and to travel with a sophisticated crowd. She would wait until some of them had several drinks and then try to get them alone and ask them the question, "Are you happy?" Asking it in an off-handed, disarming manner, they were honest and said, "No, I'm not." To observe them at work or in a crowd they prided themselves on the image they gave of "having it all together," and being "radiantly happy". Mary-Lou began to think that life must be just a game and everyone just pretends to be happy and so she became a great pretender.

The woman who owned the modeling studios, became religious and gave her a Bible. God used the Bible to reach her soul, for one day a man visiting her apartment who was raised in a religious home and whose father was a minister, appeared surprised at seeing the Bible so prominently displayed. He said, "What are you doing with a Bible?" She said, "I'm a Christian. I was born in America." He explained that if she were a Christian she would be going to church among other things. Mary-Lou defended herself with the comment that the church was just full of hypocrites anyway and that they were probably not living any better than she was. However, she began insisting that they go to church so he could see what she said was true.

They began to attend various churches and eventually attended a church where she began to feel a drawing in her soul as she heard the gospel preached for the first time. One Sunday the church began a series of revival meetings and someone asked her to come back at night. The following Sunday night she attended. At the close of the service a lady came back to where she was sitting and asked her to go down to the altar

to pray. The lady planned to pray for her, but Mary-Lou thought the lady was asking for prayer for herself. She went, not knowing how or for what she would pray. She didn't want the lady to think she was too stuck up to pray with her. She was surprised when the lady began to pray for her. Suddenly everyone began to pray for her. They asked her, "Will you accept Christ?" She knew nothing about Jesus, only that he had something to do with God. She wasn't about to say she wouldn't accept Him, so she said, "Sure, if He'll have me." They all rejoiced and went home. But she went home miserable, for she knew that what they thought happened didn't happen.

She said to her friend, "They shouldn't have done that. Now I can't go back." "Don't be too hard on them," he admonished. "They are giving their lives to help people like you." "What do you mean, people like me," she said defensively. When she arrived home she went into the bedroom and as she entered, her eyes fell on the words on the front page of a religious paper someone had sent her but she had never read. The words stood out in bold letters: "For this is the will of God", and she thought, "Maybe God is trying to tell me something." She made up her mind to pray and ask God to tell her the answers.

A seed of faith had been planted in her heart when she was around 12 years old. She had attended a country church a few times with a friend. After service one day a lady smilingly said to her, "Do you know there is a God and that he loves you?" Mary-Lou instantly chose to believe it. When she went home she walked down the old lane behind their farm to her favorite fishing spot and looked up into the trees and said, "I'm glad there's a God, and that you love me. But you must be busy with all the affairs of the world so I'll never bother you with mine unless they are too big for me to handle. But then I know you'll help me." So now she went into the other room to pray, expecting God to help her. She prayed, "This is that something big. If I'm a sinner, show me and show me who Jesus is." God flashed her life before her and said, "All you've ever done was for yourself. Do you think if I called you to stand before me in judgment, you'd make it?" She knew she wouldn't. She knew she was lost. Then He said, "Remember how many times you wished that you could be born again?" She had meant it physically, but God used it spiritually. He went on, "Christ died that you could be born again and to help you keep from sinning. But you have to believe." All of a sudden, in her mind's eye, she saw Christ dying on the cross for her. She endeavored to believe. She prayed for what seemed like several hours. Finally she was aware of a substance being let down from Heaven. She was encouraged by it and felt that if she hung onto it she would make it. She believes the substance was faith, and that God was giving her faith to hold on to. She kept praying to believe until suddenly she prayed, "I do believe". At that exact moment she was born again from above and felt like a new person. She was aware for the first time in her life of the presence of Jesus. What a glorious moment it was. All that night Jesus stood by her bedside. She was aware of His presence with her, and was aware of an eye from above looking at her. And from the time she was saved, she had lived just for the awareness of His presence, and for the smile of His approval. All that mattered was that she pleased Him and had His blessing on

her life. She was so happy and was aware that she felt a deep love for her wonderful Saviour and was loved deeply in return. She began to pour over the Bible and look to God to speak to her as she prayed and communed with Him, and read His Word. Someone gave her the book "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life" to read and it helped her to think of herself as God's trusting child, and to build faith that He would look after her. Soon after, she was sanctified wholly.

Mary-Lou would refuse to go to lunch with the other models, and when they were all gone to lunch, she would kneel down in the lounge in the modeling agency and pray and read the Bible on her knees. She would type out scriptures and keep them in her pocket, as she'd walk down the streets of San Francisco.

God led her out of the modeling world and into the sales field selling fine Bavarian China and Crystal. She began to live by faith day by day, and ask God to direct her steps. He prospered her and she received a reward for leading the nation in sales. Eventually she owned her own sales company.

After ten years in the sales field, God called her into fulltime service and to preach the Gospel in Detroit. That began, as she said, the greatest and happiest adventure of her life. God directed her to sell all her possessions or give them away, and live totally by faith. From then on she prayed in all her needs and the needs of the ministry, and taking no government money nor being funded by any organization, God began to do great miracles. As she prayed for food to eat and for personal things she needed, God miraculously provided.

God directed her to rent the first storefront building on September 28, 1966. One day she drove down Third and saw an old building with a "for rent" sign in the window. The building was old and ugly, but seeing some antique furniture in the window, she stopped her car, wiped off a section of the glass in the door and peered inside, and at that exact moment God said to her, "Rent this building."

She began to clean out the building. One day as she was sweeping up coal dust, God spoke to her and said, "If you mind me, I'll show through your life how I'll provide for anyone who will trust me even as I did when I fed Elijah by the ravens, and I'll open doors in churches so you can tell how you live by faith." And that is the purpose of her "Candlestick Ministry."

She began her ministry by walking the streets witnessing and passing out tracts. She went door-to-door evangelizing the whole neighborhood. She fed the poor and hungry. She set up a little chapel area in that first building. On December 10, 1966, she dedicated the little chapel to God to be used to win souls for Christ, and began to have church services there.

Soon souls were being saved – children, adults, alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, an Indian professor and his wife from Wayne State University, and people from all walks of life and all kinds of bondages of sin. Her first ministry was "The Glorious Freedom Mission" and was her ministry of mercy to the Cass Cor-

ridor needy. God blessed her ministry and from that first storefront, the ministry expanded to a complex of buildings covering a whole block. She “prayed out” three bars, two of which the Ministry miraculously came to own.

God led her to begin a broadcast on a Christian station, which she called “The Miracle of Faith Radio Broadcast.” God led her into other outreaches. Through the “Faith Miracle Multi-Media Ministry”, DVD’s and 3- screen slide programs show what God has done in inner city Detroit thru her ministry. Her street ministry is called the “Calvary Love” ministry. The “Mustard Seed Publication” ministry prints tracts, the monthly Faith Letter, booklets, etc. The “Sound of Hope” tape ministry provides tapes of the Bible, spiritual music, children’s character building tapes, messages, etc. for loaning to the people to whom she ministered. When the old Midtown Theater was purchased it was named “The Evangelistic Tabernacle of Faith.” Then God directed her to use “Rev. Mary-Brown Evangelistic Ministries, Inc.” as the overall name of her ministries and to retain the other names also.

A book is in the process of being published called “In the Power of His Might” telling all about her life and ministry. The following are excerpts from the book:

**Miracles:** “When God told me to rent the first storefront building, the owner didn’t care if he rented it or not. He said his friend had things stored in the building and he wasn’t going to press him to get them out, but I could talk to him and see if I could get his permission to dispose of his abandoned things. The man was cooperative enough to give me permission to dispose of his things but added that he was not going to lift a hand to take anything out of the building himself. The owner reluctantly let me rent the building and it took me three months to clear out the trash and debris in and around the building. Then I set it up as our little chapel.

On the one side there were communists and above them was the Black Power Organization. To the right of me was a flourishing bar. Above me was a rather strange man. The other side of the communists was a tinsmith shop, and then there was an old boarded up house on the corner.

There was no lock on my door at first. I began to fight the fight of faith. I would quote promises and walk back and forth down the aisle of that little chapel and say, “Lord, you’re the same God that David had and you’re the same God that Daniel had when you stopped the mouths of the lions, and you’re my God.” Then God told me to envision an angel standing guard at the door to keep me safe, and I went peacefully to sleep.

As God directed me, and without any money, and without knowing where any would come from, I hired an Indian to paint the building. He wanted \$100.00 within 3 days. Nothing came in and no one came in on Monday or Tuesday. But on Wednesday one letter arrived. Although the address was wrong, it somehow got to the right destination. A strange thing had happened. An article had appeared in the Detroit News about the mission, but gave the wrong address. Mrs. Wilson from Royal Oak sent \$100 elsewhere but the

letter was returned to her. She checked the postage. It was sufficient. Address? It was correct also. But when the postmaster offered to send it through again, Mrs. Wilson said a funny feeling came over her. She stepped to the other side of the post office and prayed, "Lord, what are you trying to tell me?" He said, "I want you to write that check to the lady you read about in the Detroit News." She sat down, wrote the check to me, mailed it using the incorrect address and it arrived just in time!

**Souls Saved:** "Frank Nicewonder lay on our door step drunk most of the time. He was so incorrigible that even at the age of 6 he was in jail and then to a juvenile home. When in prison as an adult for attempted murder, he was still so incorrigible that he spent many days in solitary confinement with only bread and water for food. Finally he was put on a chain gang and given hard labor. After many years in prison, he was released and came to Detroit. We gave him food and clothing and ministered to him about God's love for him and His desire to save him. God melted his heart and he would say to me, "Pastor, God's a good God, isn't He?" After he was saved he lived with his sister, got a job and then married. He put his testimony on tape and sent it to me.

"Rev. Brown, you know when I came to the mission I didn't even know how I got there. I had been messed up ever since I was a kid – in and out of jails. I didn't believe in God or the Bible. I ended up in the penitentiary for armed robbery and attempted murder. When I got out I ended up on Third Street. I know I was ready to die and go to hell. All I know is I came to myself sitting at the kitchen table in your mission and you were praying for me. I'm so happy that God led me to the Glorious Freedom Mission and to God and a new life. I have peace and happiness in God. Tell the poor guys on the street what God has done for me. I weep and pray for them."

**On faith:** "One of the truths we can learn, as Christians, is that we are born again to live and walk on the high ground of faith – above the sin and immorality of this world. On the Highway of Faith there is no room for doubt and unbelief. Faith will enable us to live like God's people and soar above the weights that would bind and keep us down. What breath is to the body, faith is also to the soul. The life of my soul lies not in what I think nor what I fancy or what I imagine or what I enjoy of fine feelings, but only in that which faith apprehends to be the Word of God and the actual experience I have in my soul, which His truth declared to me and His Word promised me depending on a Person to fulfill it, and the Holy Spirit imparted in my soul."

Pastor Mary-Lou Brown's prayer is that God will be glorified and others will be blessed and strengthened in faith as they learn about the great things God has done in and through her life and ministry by His Great Power. He took a poor country girl from a Fashion Model to a Skid Row Missionary, loving others through her heart and winning souls for Christ. She believed that what He can do for one, He can do for all.

**Editor's Note: Rev. Mary-Lou Brown went to Heaven on January 17, 2017 at the age of 97.**



# News from around the Conference

News articles on this page have been submitted by various Pilgrim Churches. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as necessary to fit space requirements. E-mail all news to: [pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)

## **Palestine, IL - (By Erline Ervin)**

Our hearts are full of gratitude for God's continued help as we start into another new year! We experienced a wonderful fall season which included several blessings from the Lord!

Our pastor was privileged to spend two weeks in Ukraine with Dr. Steve Gibson holding conventions for IHC. They enjoyed ministering in various churches of different denominations with so many new open doors and mingling with the precious people there. We all enjoyed the Power Point & the stories Pastor Gray shared with us at church.

We also were blessed in our Revival with Rev. Dan Stetler once again! His preaching was so anointed and many were encouraged by his ministry in Word and Song!

We were also thrilled to add to our church staff this fall! Josh and Katie Ranke will lead our Teen & Young Adult Department. We are including a picture of our staff which includes, Assistant Pastor & Wife: Steve & Tracy Stratton, Pastor & Wife: Paul & Nancy Gray, Teen & Young Adult Pastor & Wife: Josh & Katie Ranke, Jr. Worship Pastor & Wife: Mark & Lana Gray. We have been contributing to our building fund and with the Lord's help, the church is hoping to start a multipurpose building this spring.



## Church News Continued . . .

### Rochester Hills, MI - (By Pastor Dan Plemmons)

Greetings from Rochester Hills. God has been faithful, just as He has always been, and we rejoice in His goodness to the people of our local congregation. The Winter months always seem to hinder our attendance, but we thank God for the faithfulness of our people, and their dedication to His house.

We trust good things are happening in your churches as we work together to strengthen the cause of Christ. He is coming soon, and we want to be found faithful to Him.

### Pilgrim Missions Update (By Maurice and Jean Roll)

Greetings in Jesus' Name. *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.* **Romans 1:8**

As Missionary Advisors, we were privileged to participate in the new birth of Good Hope Pilgrim Holiness Church. The church took in six members on January 16, 2017.

Rev. Laurent Bruno is the field chairman of the Caribbean Pilgrim Holiness Conference & pastor of Good Hope. We are truly blessed to welcome this body of believers into the fellowship. Pray that God will bless the work and enable it to be effective in its endeavors.





# A Woman's Perspective

By Stephanie Burley

## Dreaming and Doing

Recently I heard someone pose this question, "Would you do something you don't want to do to get an outcome that you desire?" The context in which the question was presented caused it to strike me in a pretty forceful way, and it made for some interesting introspection.

I am a fairly classic firstborn. Dreaming comes easy for me. I can see end results with an amazing amount of clarity and color. On the other hand, motivation to take the baby steps...well, it's a little slower in coming! Maybe you can relate.

As a college student, there were lots of little things that I just did not want to do. To begin with, I wasn't all that crazy about majoring in elementary education. I was one who chose my college before I chose my major, rather than selecting a field then looking at colleges that had programs within my chosen course of study. Looking back, I see God's hand in all of those decisions, but at the time I found it very frustrating to have to sift through piles of "silly" projects and seemingly endless lectures on subjects that really wouldn't impact my future in a real practical way...or so I thought. I detested the time spent making file folder games for preschoolers and notebooks full of worksheets for elementary students...little did I know.

Really, on a much larger scale, I think most ambitious women have goals, plans, and objectives for their own lives and for the lives of those over whom they have influence. It's much more complex than just making it to the end of the week or the year, or holding out until the kids are grown, or even until we retire from our chosen professions. There are dreams that we want to see fulfilled. We don't want to just make it through life, we want to L\*I\*V\*E\* every moment to its maximum potential! Getting from point A to point B, however, can be more difficult than it seems. It requires effort, and lots of it.

If you listen to conversations among women, you may hear statements like these:

"You have no idea how much I would love to lose some weight!"

"Wow...what I wouldn't give to be able to drive a car like that!"

"I sure wish my daughter could play the piano."

"Wouldn't it be nice to come home to a clean house?"

"I wish my kids had more interest in spiritual things."

"It just seems like we never have enough money."

"She's lucky that she has such a great husband." . . . and you could keep adding to this list.

It is sad that many of us will only continue to wish because the outcome never becomes real enough to propel us into action. As much as a momma of four likes to think, a clean house is not a goal that cannot be reached. It requires discipline, consistency, and more discipline, but it can be done. Nice husbands are a blessing, and we can help to make our husbands nicer by being better wives. Complaining about a "bad" husband will never improve the situation. We can begin to shed excess weight by controlling our eating impulses and exercising our muscles. Not easy, but worth it. Children can learn to play musical instruments when their parents are willing to sacrifice to pay for lessons and then require the necessary practice. Money can be more abundant when one is willing to work hard to acquire it, and then use it wisely. Parents can raise spiritually minded children when they love God, make their home a place for His presence, speak highly of the church and its people, train the children in His ways, and involve them in cheerful acts of service (cheerful is key).

Inside each of us resides a God-given mechanism that determines our actions and responses in every situation we encounter. It is our will. God doesn't want puppet servants, He wants people who actively choose to follow Him and seek to make good decisions, so He created us to have a choice. This same inner force is what will either help us reach our dreams or leave us continuing to wish.

Here is my question for us today. Are we willing to do something we don't want to do in order to achieve an outcome that we really desire? If you've been wishing and hoping, I challenge you to begin a plan of action to turn those dreams into reality.



# teenTOPICS

*insight from teens, for teens*

Our first article for this section of PNN is written by a young man from Lima, Ohio, who attends Pilgrim Christian School and is in the 11th grade. Our thanks to Xaviar Gross for this wonderful article!

All my life I have gone to church, and I always believed in God, but was never really serious about God. I went to church, hung out with my friends, and went home. We had a worship service and a message, but I never took an interest into looking deeper into what was said, even though I believed it.

After years of this repetitive church life, I was starting to question God. I was 16, and was in a youth group. In the summer of 2016, I went to my church youth camp. This was my third year at youth camp, and although I wanted God to prove Himself to me, I didn't expect it. I didn't focus on God.

Every night we had a service, and the first and second nights I saw a few people get saved. I saw many others be lifted from anxiety, depression, insecurity, and some even thoughts of suicide. I became jealous. Although, my issues weren't as "bad" as some of the others, I had struggles that needed to be addressed. I questioned my unique purpose in this world. Did He have something for me that only I could fulfill? I questioned whether God was there at all. He, along with some of my youth group, didn't seem to notice me.

On the second night of youth camp, we were split up across the room. Some were praying, others were talking, and some, like me were alone and thinking. I remember sitting in one of the rows, alone, and I looked up and prayed, "God, why did everyone but me have a need met? Are You even there?"

The next night, the Holy Spirit spoke to me through my pastor, and he said, "Xavier, you're not overlooked." His words penetrated my soul. Through his words, God gave me purpose, calmed my mind, and gave me the courage to go back to my home and school, and change things for the better.

You may be thinking that this is just another heart-felt testimony with "no proof" to it. I know that was me sometimes. But when you decide to truly follow God, and you have a moment like I did, you will have a new faith in God. It's only when we truly say "yes" to God that we find unwavering faith.

Today I'm so thankful God revealed Himself to me in the summer of 2016. I don't know what I would do today if I hadn't had that experience. Not too long ago, I told my principal, teacher, and classmates my testimony, and I feel that my mission now is to help people at my school and church realize what they need to know to make their decision, so that when their moment of opportunity arrives, they are ready. I'm a shy person, but God has given me a boldness in speaking. He has called me to be a youth pastor, and I'm pursuing every opportunity to serve Him, including being part of a missions trip this summer.

For those of you who haven't had a life-changing encounter with God, I want to say that there are still struggles, but when those times come, God is there and you can trust Him and He will walk beside you.

# PASTOR TO PASTOR

Ministering to those who minister to others

By Pastor Martin Laramie

## The Heart of a Pastor

Solomon pleased the Lord when he asked for a discerning heart, one that would enable to serve his people in truth and righteousness. God answered Solomon's request giving him more than he asked. There has never been a king so wise as Solomon. Just think what God could grant us as pastors if we truly ask him with a heart set on serving those with whom we are entrusted.

One thing I think a pastor needs is **an honest heart** one that enables him or her to live life based on a set of core values, biblical values, one that empower the pastor to be transparent, authentic, and to seek the truth wherever it leads. It is only with such a heart that the man or woman of God can be trusted by their people and faithful to the souls in their care.

In having an honest heart a pastor cannot but help walking in the light of holiness and seeking God for a pure heart, a heart that possesses a singleness of thought and intention when it comes to obeying and submitting to the will of God. Even when a pastor faces very difficult circumstances and is asked to make great sacrifices, he or she will be able to pray, "Not my will, Father, but thine be done."

An honest pastor who is authentic and empowered with the Spirit will be courageous for the Truth and free of a man-fearing spirit no matter what message God gives him or her to preach.

The pastor will need **a courageous heart** that will not bend or bow to the expectations and pressures of this present world but will speak the truth with holy boldness.

Although a pastor is courageous and speaks the truth, he or she does so in love and has **a compassionate heart**. It was said of Christ that he looked on the multitudes with compassion, seeing them as sheep having no shepherd. The compassionate heart of a shepherd will lead a pastor to carry burdens for the spiritual welfare of his or her flock. Such pastors will grieve over the faults and failings of their people and yearn for God to give them up to date victory in Jesus Christ. A compassionate pastor will gently lead his people rather than drive them.

Pastors who would lead their people well need to ask God for **a discerning heart**. Who can know the heart but God? The Lord is able to give pastors the wisdom they need when dealing with the precious souls within their flock. Each person is unique and each spiritual battle is different and there are no easy answers when it comes to matters of the heart. If such a wise man as Solomon asked God for a discerning heart where does that leave the rest of us?

Another important thing to cultivate is **a devotional heart**. The pastor who would have the mind of the Spirit and be able to discern the great truths that need to be preached from the Bible must spend time dwelling on

the deep things of God with a heart that truly is in love with Jesus Christ and communes with the Lord on a regular basis. Jesus lifted up His eyes and was in the presence of the Father, freely communing with God. One who cultivates a devotional heart lives with a sense of the continual presence of God, possessing a prayerful spirit, one that is sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. The pastor can lead his or her people no deeper than what he or she has achieved in their own walk with God.

Another type of heart pastors need to develop is **an open heart**, one where those they lead can sense that they are approachable and open to honest and thoughtful criticism and correction. A mentor once told me, “Martin, you know you will have some students that are smarter than you are. That is just how it is when you teach others.” Pastors must realize there may be others in their congregation with a breadth and depth of spiritual wisdom and experience that can truly help him or her live a deeper Christian life if they will but open their hearts and listen to these dear saints of God. If one cannot take constructive criticism, his or her potential for spiritual growth is limited. May God give us an open heart wherever the truth comes from.

It is also vital for a pastor to cultivate **a forgiving heart**. It is not unusual for leaders to attract people to themselves that are given to causing conflict. Many a pastor has been assaulted by some embittered person who has lost his or her way. Jesus with a forgiving spirit even stooped to wash the feet of Judas. There are many occasions where thoughtless people may break the heart of their pastor with a betrayal of confidence or some other unkind act. If we truly wish to see these recover lost spiritual ground, we must minister to them with a forgiving heart and a right spirit.

Lastly, a pastor must have **a faithful heart**, one that continually looks to the needs of his or her congregation. I remember one night the Lord woke me up and asked me to go down to a local coffee shop to see a person. God said to me, “Jack is down there and he needs you to minister to him.” I got up and got dressed and went down to the coffee shop and sure enough, Jack was there. He had been thinking about his spiritual struggles and that no one truly cared for his soul. I told Jack that God had gotten me out of bed and asked me to go see him. Jack had tears in his eyes, realizing God truly cared for his soul.

In reviewing all the things that a pastor’s heart needs to possess, it is truly a comfort to know that we are the workmanship of Christ and that he is able to supply all our needs. There have been different times in my ministerial experience where I had to grow and learn to cultivate each of these attributes. Sometimes a pastor will fight some difficult spiritual battles before winning the victory in some areas—we are human--we are put in a place of service where often we are left open and vulnerable. If you truly love people, eventually some difficult trial will come your way. But thank God, his grace is sufficient.



**Rev. Martin and Nancy Laramie** have been married for 33 years and served several churches in pastoral ministry. Martin began his ministry filling in for many pastors in the Detroit area.

Martin felt a call to the Taylor, MI, Pilgrim Holiness Church in 1987, and spent many wonderful years there. Later, he was interim pastor at the Peebles PHC before moving to serve the Jackson, MI, PHC.

Martin and Nancy currently reside in Bloomington, Illinois, where they are pastor and wife of the Bloomington Pilgrim Holiness Church.



# About Pilgrim News & Notes

*Pilgrim News & Notes* is the official publication of the Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church, and is published bi-monthly.

The main goal of *Pilgrim News & Notes* is to be an encouragement to our readers, as well as a source of information to those with connections or interests in our Conference.

All submissions are welcome, however, we reserve the right to edit as necessary to fit design and space needs. Not all submissions will be published.

Please email all submissions to the editor via the contact info below:

[pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)

## ***Conference Info:***

**Conference President**, Rev. Don Nichols

**Conference Vice President**, Rev. Mark Arnett

**Conference Secretary**, Rev. Tim Forsee

**Conference Treasurer**, Rev. Bryan Line

**Conference Missionary Representative**, Dr. Craig Dahler

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## ATTENTION PILGRIM CHURCH NEWS REPORTERS . . .

We would love to be able to report on the happenings in and around your church, but we need to here from YOU!

If you would like your church news to be included in the next PNN, please have your report to the editor no later than March 15th. THANKS!

Email your report to: [pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)