

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 9, in the year of our Lord 2020 - #862

A Baby At Christmas

Her name is Amanda. She's a beautiful, tiny, young wife and mother and nurse. She was the very first baby that I held in my arms when I was called to be pastor here at Bermudian 30 years ago. There's a picture of a 40-year-old Larry, with black hair and beard, in bib overalls holding baby Amanda. Through the years I've watched her grow up. I shared in the service of parent & child consecration with her parents Roy & Tammy. I watched her bring home numerous awards as she showed cattle. I celebrated her graduations from high school and nursing school. I officiated the wedding for her and her husband Josh. I celebrated and then shared in consecration of her & Josh's first baby Bryant. She served as Cathy's nurse at the rehab hospital. This summer I shared the funeral service for her Pap, Big Jim, Cedar Hill Farms patriarch, who passed away with COVID. Yesterday Amanda gave birth to her and Josh's second child, Jamie Lynn Stewart, 7 pounds, 3 ounces, 18 inches. Jamie's "big" brother called her "Jamie Lynn Christmas." Indeed! Congratulations to the Thompson, Stewart & Eisenhower families! It's a baby at Christmas!

Oh, what a gift! What perfect timing! For the Eisenhower/Thompson – Cedar Hill Farms family ... facing Christmas without Jim ... what a gift! For the Bermudian Church of the Brethren family ... still separated between those worshiping Sundays in person and those worshiping with us on-line ... what a gift. To family, friends and neighbors ... COVID weary, too many losses, frustration & stress overload ... what a gift! It's a baby at Christmas. Welcome Jamie Lynn ... welcome to our embrace ... welcome to our love!

Seven hundred (700) years before Christ was born. Israel's life was a mess. Exiled for their sin. Feeling separated from God. Exile weary. Too many losses. Frustration & stress overload. But God speaks a word of hope through the prophet Isaiah.

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. ... For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given...." Isaiah 9:2,6 NIV

Now it would be a l-o-n-g time until that promise was fulfilled. Fulfilled in a Baby at Christmas!

“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman....” Galatians 4:4 NIV

We celebrate Christmas by remembering that Baby! Yes, He would grow to be our Savior! Yes, He would die for our sins! Yes, He would defeat death in resurrection and be the firstborn from the dead! Yes, He lives & reigns as our King of kings and Lord of lords! Yes, He is coming again! But ... we remember the Gift of a Baby at Christmas.

Carl Sandberg famously said, *“A baby is God’s opinion that the world should go on.”* Yes! No matter how weary, or *“not in the Christmas mood,”* you may be feeling ... let Jamie Lynn Christmas be our reminder of how a Baby changed everything! We can’t stop loving. We can’t stop giving. We can’t stop believing. We can’t stop telling the love of Jesus! Yesterday ... Jamie Lynn was one of 385,000 babies born in the world! A very good reminder to us of the hope & faith that we must carry forward. Today say a prayer for Josh, Amanda, Bryant & Jamie Lynn. Today say a prayer and maybe decide to give a donation to ministries like our partner, Tender Care Pregnancy Centers. Today, if you have the opportunity, hug the children in your life. Or write them a note, or give a call, or visit them via face time. Today why not touch base with some family with a new child, some single mom or dad, some neighbor, family member, co-worker, or church family member, or teacher, who is making a difference in the lives of children. Today, pause by a Nativity Scene in your home and give thanks for the Baby at Christmas ... and in that Baby find hope, encouragement, for the way forward. Thank you, Jamie Lynn, for the reminder! Bless you dear little one!

Advent Blessings! Pastor Larry <><