



**Lowell & Claudia Wertz**  
**P.O. Box 1344**  
**Kigoma, Tanzania**



December 2023

Dear Friends,

Isn't this the greatest time of year? Thanksgiving, followed by Christmas, followed by New Year. I wanted God to show me this year what to be thankful for.

Paul lists in Romans 1 all kinds of evil sins, but it puts thanklessness to God on top of the list. We need to be thankful **for** various things and people, and thankful **to** God, the source of everything.

God showed me the usual list -- things and loved ones. None of those were removed from the gratitude list. But this year a few additional surprises came along. First, was life itself. I am only here because He gave me and keeps giving me life. I hadn't thanked Him enough for my very existence.

Next was a real surprise. I was to be thankful for my Ford F250 truck. During our early marriage, we never had a car worth more than \$200. Claudia scrapped the frost with her credit card from the inside of the windshield -- the heater didn't work. Engine mounts were shot and she had to press the accelerator very gently lest the engine would rear up trying to leave the engine compartment. There were always problems, breakdowns, and frustrations.

A few years ago, when we got our new travel trailer, we needed a vehicle that could safely pull it. Claudia's Mom had worked as a cafeteria cook, living a modest life. When the Lord called her home, she left us some money. We used it to pay for most of the F250. It works, it is comfortable, and it hasn't broken down. Every time I drive the truck, my heart is filled with gratitude to Mom. I love her for this blessing. Thank you God, for Mom.

Many of our believing friends have lost loved ones or are facing serious health crises. Yet in their grief there is a tender thankfulness to God. They are grateful for good years spent with a spouse or for past health and hope for healing. There is thankfulness for His mercy and love when it was most needed. There is assurance in knowing the God of love. This thankfulness is holy and precious. The baby of the manger has become the greatest reality of our lives. He is Savior, Lord, King, and Friend.

Thank you God, for Christmas. Thank you for Jesus Christ -- Your one and only Son.

Love,

*Lowell + Claudia*



# Joy in the Harvest<sup>®</sup>

*Harvest*  
your  
BLESSINGS

## 2023 — Challenges and Blessings

“Hope itself is like a star — not to be seen in the sunshine of prosperity, and only to be discovered in the night of adversity.”

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834-1892*  
Called “Prince of Preachers”, thought one of the greatest of all time. Dr. David Livingstone carried a copy of a sermon of his on all of his African explorations.

**2023 was a year of financial challenges and yet so many blessings.**

The formation of the *Global Methodist Church* saw many churches in the USA (over 4,000) disaffiliate from the *United Methodist Church*.

Our church support base has been 99% UMC so we have been impacted.

**During this financial challenge, we were so thrilled to see individuals step forward with extra giving. You will never know how you encouraged our souls.**

As I write this, we still have red ink for 2023. JOY has ended every year, except one, in the black. We pray our December giving will lift us out of the red. We are grateful to our supporters who have carried us at this time.

**With the funds available, we managed to continue every aspect of the work.**

Kids were fed, the Gospel proclaimed, the sick received medical care, the disabled received care, and Jesus Christ was honored and glorified in the hearts of new believers. Blessings for sure! ☩



### CHECKLIST



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www.joyintheharvest.com

https://web.facebook.com/  
JoyintheHarvestKigoma/



#### Gift Envelope Enclosed

Your gift is vitally important.



### WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

**When we decided to switch our newsletter from print to email, we didn't realize it would be a huge job. We need to know from everyone what is desired, the email or print newsletter.**

A four lady team from *Cheers Church*, has risen to the challenge of calling the churches that have not yet indicated their preference. They already contacted many



**These four ladies from the “Cheers Church” are calling our churches that haven't yet indicated email or paper.**

churches and are continuing this work. Want to see who your are speaking with? From left to right, the ladies are: Karen Osborne, Kim Southerland, Deb Aschemier, and Natalie Brown.

**Mission work has always moved forward on the strength of committed women.**

JOY thanks these ladies and all the churches helping us get this important job finished up. ☩

*Thankful for  
God's  
Amazing  
Grace*

# God Is Always Good



## Our Family Thanksgiving in the States

We finally got to meet our nine monthly old grandson — Caleb Howard Wertz! Luke and Kara know how to put on a real thanksgiving meal! Luke's family lives on a 30 acre farm in southern Indiana. We had so much fun. Levi's new ATV was the big hit, with a drone filming the grand adventure. Julia taught me all about raising chickens.

## JOY Ministry Overview

- Monthly support for refugee pastors
- Radio JOY, two locations – 24/7
- Computer School - 7,000+ graduates
- Help churches with construction
- Weekly Youth Meetings
- Weekly Widows Meetings for 1,000
- Destitute Camp - Handicapped Care
- Feeding Center for Hungry Kids and Elderly, three days a week
- Prison Ministry in five prisons
- Lifesaving Help for People in Crisis
- Guest Houses Ministry
- HIV/AIDS Prevention—Soccer
- Helped build classrooms
- Evangelism – open air events
- Teaching Pastors
- Bible Studies
- Community Center
- Ministry to Refugees
- Training Seminars
- Housing for the Poor
- 70 Staff Jobs (supporting families)
- Construction of New Apprenticeship Training Building

## Shorts

- Mindy's reminder: We can receive stock gifts and you may benefit. For a 2023 tax deduction, gifts must be made by Dec 31; last minute gifts can be made online at [www.joyintheharvest.com](http://www.joyintheharvest.com)
- Mindy, our USA office manager, is battling breast cancer. She is now having two rounds of chemo which are very hard to endure. There will be more treatments after the chemo. **Pray for her and the family.** Both their daughters are in college.
- We enjoyed lunch with Ron and Pam Tillet. Ron gave us our motto, "... so they may know Jesus..." 31 years ago.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

# Claudia's Second Knee Replacement

**Q. We have been praying for Claudia. How is it going with the new knee?**

—asked by many

A. On October 2nd, she had surgery done at *OrthoIllinois* in Rockford, IL. We have to get major medical done in the USA due to Medicare not paying for overseas procedures. We felt the power of so many praying for us. These things are never easy and



**Coming out of the recovery room. She is smiling as the surgical pain meds take two days to wear off...**

this knee was more painful and is taking longer to rehab. Our therapists at TriCore Rehab have done an excellent job. The doctor says every knee is different but was surprised it didn't go as well as the first knee as he used a robot on this one. She is making progress and we expect to depart for Tanzania on Dec. 13, Lord willing. She wants to be home in Tanzania for Christmas. Thanks for your prayers for the knee and for us as we return. ☩

*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light... they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest." Isaiah 9:2,3*



We wish to thank each one who is making the work of *Joy in the Harvest* possible through their financial support.

Please make checks payable to: *Joy in the Harvest*



*Enhancing Trust*

*Joy in the Harvest* is a member of the *Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability*.

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