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December 2024

Dear Friends,

God's ways are always far beyond our ways. Few would disagree. Yet it is hard to trust a God we don't fully understand. We know from a universe of infinite beauty and incomprehensible numbers that God's ways are not just different from our own, but are higher and superior. They are grand and they are glorious.

It is not in the vastness of God's creation we find comfort and answers how to trust Him. Really we are just too awestruck by His power, glory, and greatness. We don't trust because God is big and we are small. Rather, it is in the smallest details of our lives we find His love, comfort, and our purpose. Life's hardest events can't compare to God's personalized love. We trust Him like children trust their mothers. Perhaps we don't understand, but we know she acts because she loves us.

His ways are higher. His plans are good — perfect in every way. In the present we don't see or feel that perfection. Someday we will. Both in the biggest and smallest things, God's nature is revealed. We struggle with life's hard losses, pain, and cares. It is beyond our understanding that a loving God allows this. Something in us revolts that John the Baptist was decapitated. But we are drawn to a manager scene of a young woman giving birth to the Savior of the world. God's ways are higher than our ability to understand. We move our hearts to trust fully because we know God is good and in the end we will know His plan is perfect. For now, we will be God's people of faith. We trust because His love is seen and felt in both the big things and tiny things of our lives. Life's cruelties does not make trust unreasonable, it makes trust the only reasonable response.

So come again with me to that manager. Come and behold the Savior. Come for these few days at the end of this year to rejoice. Rest your soul there. God's plan is for Jesus to bless you with forgiveness and eternal life. Hardly anything else matters. Live like friends of the King of Kings. Know in the quiet times of life you are secure because God holds you and won't let go. The Almighty sent Jesus for you. He is ours for the asking. And that is what makes it a very Merry Christmas.

Love,

*Lowell + Claudia*

# Joy in the Harvest®



## Speaking Furlough Underway!!

“True friends  
are never apart,  
maybe in distance,  
but never in heart.”

**Helen Keller** 1880-1968

Lost her sight and hearing at 19 months old. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a BA degree. She wrote 14 books.

**We may have gotten off to a slow start in September, crawling into our truck & trailer with my knee, but we have been picking up speed ever since.**

After three speaking engagements

in August in Illinois (they were so kind), a dash to Michigan (fantastic) and then we were off to Long Island to a wonderful church by the Atlantic Ocean. Next up was New Jersey with three significant events. Then Pennsylvania — always very missions minded. We meet with old and new churches and with old friends and new friends. We were warmly received in PA. Another great church in Ohio and it was time to return for a week to our base campground.

**We had traveled over 5,000 miles on this the first leg. After a week in Illinois to reset, we started our next travel leg. Many more friends, churches, and states await. Thank you to all who have received us and have been so kind and loving!** ☩



### CHECKLIST

#### USA Office Address

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#### Lowell & Claudia Wertz

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#### New Website

[www.joyintheharvest.com](http://www.joyintheharvest.com) or .org

#### Facebook

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



### WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

**Ted and Audrey Newton are a very special couple to Joy in the Harvest and us!**

We first met them as part of a team that came to Kigoma in 2004. Ted holds a doctorate in mathematics and Audrey makes the best macaroni salad in the whole world! Both are educators.



**Lowell & Claudia camped on the Newton's concrete slab in Pennsylvania.**

They once owned a fifth wheel RV and Ted built a docking stand for it with hookups and a perfectly level slab of concrete.

**They have welcomed us as family and the concrete slab has become JOY's eastern PA base of operations.**

A kinder, more Godly couple are not to be found anywhere. We love them and cherish the time we can spend with them. ☩



# Please Pray for Us!

## United Methodists (UMC) and Global Methodists (GMC)

For over 33 years individual UMC churches have been supporting JOY. We have never received any UMC denominational support. With the movement of some churches to disaffiliate and the birth of the GMC, it has caused an earthquake in our support base and cratered our budget. JOY is an independent, evangelical mission with a commitment to a high view of the Scripture and obedience to the Great Commission. We welcome and need support from local churches, as well as individuals, that share our beliefs. We have been visiting UMC churches that have been supporting JOY for many years. Some of those churches are now GM churches. We

also have visited new GM churches. The GMC denomination has vetted and approved JOY for GM church support and their approval letter is available. We will need to regain lost support caused as an unintended consequence of the formation of the GMC. We welcome all local UMC churches and GM churches committed to the Scriptures and the Great Commission to partner with us. Networking to find new support is vital for JOY's future. We try to accept every invitation to visit with all churches, groups, and individuals. We ask everyone to help us in this effort and thank God for His people. ✠

### Ministry Overview

- Monthly support for refugee pastors
- Radio JOY, two locations – 24/7 including 750 radios for prisoners
- 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

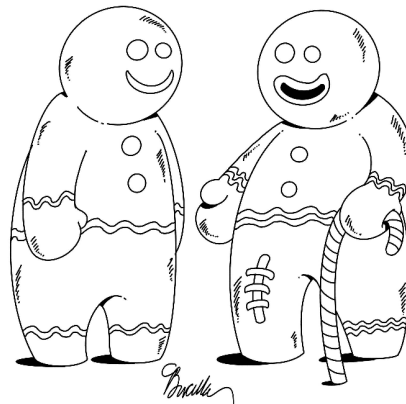


### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## How is Lowell's Knee? — Part 2

**How is Lowell's knee?**  
— asked by dozens (thanks so much!)

One year ago I fell in the dark and badly hurt my left knee. Months of pain in Africa, was followed by an unsuccessful meniscus surgery in South Africa in March 2024. In July 2024 I had total knee replacement in the USA. The first four weeks were very painful. After six weeks of



**“The knee replacement went well, I've already graduated from a candy walker.”**

physical therapy, my range of motion was okay. Working through the pain, we started speaking in August. People have been so kind — helping in every way. I have the most prayed over knee in America. I am improving but the doctor just said it will take at least six more months to heal. I am taking less pain medicine and stopped using a crutch. However, furlough camping is interesting. Praising God for His healing. ✠

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