

PASTOR'S ARTICLE (CONTINUED)

2. **James 1:2-4.** The point? *Christians can have joy amid trials because we know God will use our trials to produce faithfulness and maturity.* James 1:2-4 says, “Count it all **joy**, my brothers, when you meet **trials** of various kinds,” for you know that the testing of your faith **produces** steadfastness.⁴ And let steadfastness have its **full effect**, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” The pattern is the same as in the Romans passage. The same three things are linked up: joy, suffering, and spiritual growth. “Trials of various kinds” do not mean that God has left you or stopped working in your heart, mind, and life. Trials are a natural part of life, but for the child of God, they take on a supernatural purpose to grow us in the experience of grace in Christ. We all need this reminder! We are to consider it joy when trials come our way because they are one of God’s tools. He will use them to form and fashion us according to His perfect wisdom. He will use them to produce “steadfastness” i.e., enduring faithfulness. And then, steadfastness will “have its full effect,” which is a deeper and stronger maturity in the faith, or as James says, “you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” “Perfect” in this context does not mean without fault, but whole or mature. It is essentially a synonym for complete, and together they mean mature rather than immature.

3. **1 Peter 1:6-17.** The point? *Christians can rejoice amid trials because we know God will use our trials to test and faith and fix our hearts more and more on future glory.* 1 Peter 1:6-7, “In this you **rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various **trials**,⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to **result in** praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” God testing His people is a major theme in the Bible. It means that He gives us trials to expose what is in our hearts and teach us to trust in Him in new and deeper ways. If we set our hearts on temporary things, we will stumble and fall. If we fix our minds on earthly things, we will not reach maturity. If our joy is tied to physical and personal comfort, we will not be able to rejoice in God when trials and sufferings come.

Joy, suffering, and spiritual growth are linked. Rejoicing, being tested, and reaching maturity go together. A crown of glory awaits you in heaven. He is faithful to sanctify, strengthen, and sustain you until that day. Keep “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).



To read more articles from Pastor Matt, please scan the QR Code or visit timeintheword.weebly.com

ONLINE GIVING

If you would prefer to give online, please scan the QR code for a secure online giving option.



NEED HELP?

Need help with a practical need? Your deacon is here to help make the resources of the church available to you. Email our secretary Jenn if you do not know who your deacon is (secretary@NorthHarford.org)

Danny Akers daneakers@gmail.com

Lew Carter joppatrans1@gmail.com

Mark Evans evansmark@yahoo.com

Dave Good (Chairman) davidpgood@aol.com

Wayne Hudson quallybear.usmc@gmail.com

John McDonald jmcdonald47@yahoo.com

Need a pastoral visit for prayer, comfort, or encouragement? Do you need Christian counselling or guidance? Do you have a theological question? Your pastors are here to help. Don’t be afraid to text, call, or email us. We are here for you. Either contact us directly or schedule something through Jenn.

Matt Fortunato (Senior Pastor)
pastormatt@NorthHarford.org

Anthony Wilson (Associate Pastor)
pastoranthony@NorthHarford.org

Jeremiah Brown (Pastoral Intern)
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Scan the QR code or email Jenn at info@NorthHarford.org to sign up for weekly Bible Devotions from Pastor Matt.



Nursery Workers – January 4th

I AM (Crib)-Janie Steplowski and Penny Brown

II AM (Toddlers) – Alex Lewis and Phoebe Evans

PM- Combined I/II – Linda Mack and Marie Reid

Prayer Intercessor – January 4th – Tina Holmes

Greeters – January 4th – Sallye Hoover and Wes Evans

Ushers-January 4th– Gil Brown, Josiah Brown, Mark Evans*, Wes Evans*, Mark Huna, and John Steplowski

Today's Ushers - Malik Baker-Gore, Bob Burman, Frank Ciccone*, Jim Feldbush, Gary McAllister, and Tom Neunaber*

* ushers who greet in the lobby



NORTH HARFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

To live for Jesus and not ourselves.

December 28, 2025

Prayer Meeting

JANUARY 4TH
6:30-7:15 PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL

READING THE BIBLE IN 2025

This last week is a catch-up week. Congratulations on reading through the Bible in 2025!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday	9:30 AM	Sunday School
	10:45 AM	Worship Service* (Church/Facebook)
	6:30 PM	Evening Worship* (Church/Facebook)
Wednesday	5:00-7:00 PM	GriefShare (Youth Café) No Wednesday Ministries
Thursday		Church Office Closed - Happy New Year!
Friday	7:00-9:30 PM	Youth Group - Christmas Party

* Nursery Provided (birth-3 years old), Downstairs in Rooms 8 and 9

MORNING WORSHIP

Call to Worship and Announcements

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Reading: Galatians 5:22-23, Fruit of the Spirit

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Be Thou My Vision

Offering

SERMON: The Peace We Need in 2026

Luke 2:13-21, (Pew Bible Page 1337)

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name | Closing Prayer

EVENING WORSHIP

Welcome

Reading/Prayer: Luke 2:1-7

Jesus Paid It All

Reading & Prayer: John 1:1-5

I Need Thee Every Hour

SERMON: Significance of the Wise Men

Matthew 2:1-18 (Pew Bible Page 1244)

Closing Prayer

VISITING WITH US?

We are glad to have you with us this morning, and we hope God speaks to your heart through the great and wonderful truths of the Bible. Please visit the **Guest Resources** desk in the lobby, where you will find a variety of free gifts for you, including a study Bible for adults and a study Bible for teens. Email us at info@NorthHarford.org if you have any questions or special prayer requests.

UPCOMING PRAYER SERVICES

PRAYER MEETING

Our next Prayer Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 4th, from 6:30 to 7:15 PM, in the Fellowship Hall for a time of prayer. The pastor will lead a time in the Word to stir our hearts to prayer. Then, each table will have a prayer time focused on God's glory in the world, our outreach and evangelism efforts, salvation for the lost, and the health of the church. No one will be forced to pray. Nursery will be provided.

FIRST FRIDAYS PRAYER VIGIL FOR AMERICA

Join us in the Youth Café from 6-6:45 PM every FIRST FRIDAY of the month for a time of focused prayer for America. Friday, February 6th, is the next one.

WHAT TO KNOW THIS WEEK

NEW YEAR'S EVE

We will not have Wednesday night ministries this week.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office is closed on Thursday. Happy New Year!

KIDS KAMP

Kids Kamp is a day camp held at Camp Wo-Me-To for 9-12-year-olds. This year's camp will be from June 29th - July 3rd, from 9 AM - 4:30 PM. Cost is \$140. There are discounts for families sending multiple children and scholarships are available. Registration opens this Thursday, January 1st. You can register on our Church Center App, from our website, or by using the forms in the lobby. Register by May 31st.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS COSTUME PARTY

The youth, those in grades 7th-12th, are invited to the Youth Christmas Costume Party this Friday from 7-9:30 PM. Youth can dress up in a costume if they wish. There will be games, prizes, food, and fun! See Jeremiah Brown with any questions.

ON THE HORIZON

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The church council meeting that was cancelled due to snow is rescheduled for January 11th at 5 PM in Room 1.

LADIES' LUNCH AT BARRETT'S ON THE PIKE

Ladies, let's meet for lunch! Join us at Barrett's on the Pike in Bel Air on Monday, January 12th, at noon. There will be open seating, but please sign up in the lobby to RSVP so the restaurant can be prepared. See Suzanne Heiss with questions.

JARRETTSVILLE BASKETBALL CAMP

We are hosting a basketball camp again in 2026. The camp will be held on August 3rd-7th, from 9-11:30 AM, for those currently in 1st-8th grade (for the 2025-2026 school year). This FREE camp is held outside at the church. Registration starts on February 1st. Save these dates!

CHURCH NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

Last Sunday, Alex Neunaber was baptized and Peter Vaughan went forward to request membership. We are thankful! A vote for their memberships will be taken at our next business meeting. Congratulations, Alex and Peter!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Follow our Facebook page @HarfordNorth, where Pastor Matt is now sharing DAILY encouragement and Bible verses. Like, share, and comment on these posts to help grow our Facebook presence in the community.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

We have four opportunities for serving.

1. We need one more greeter to help welcome guests. Let the church office know if you are interested.
2. We need more volunteers to provide meals for our Home Care Ministry. Contact Verla Evans.
3. We have 3 openings to work in the nursery. See Lynette Winzenried to volunteer.
4. We need 1 or 2 more ladies to serve on the Kitchen Committee. See Sallye Hoover for details.

PASTOR'S ARTICLE

We ended last week's sermon on a point that I did not have time to expand on or explain. The point was about how the Bible links joy, suffering, and spiritual growth for believers in Christ. Here are the three passages I mentioned under that point, along with some explanation and encouragement.

1. Romans 5:3-5. The point? *Christians can rejoice amid suffering because we know God will use our suffering to grow us in endurance and Christian character.* Romans 5:3-4 says, "Not only that, but we **rejoice** in our **sufferings**, knowing that suffering **produces** endurance,⁴ and endurance **produces** character, and character produces hope." Be encouraged, beloved, because you do not suffer in vain, you do not suffer alone, and you will not suffer forever. This passage is quite encouraging to me. God is at work in us and in our lives despite the hardship and anguish we face. God will strengthen you. He will produce spiritual "endurance" within us for our good and His glory. This endurance will produce godly "character," which further anchors us in the "hope" we have in Christ. That means, as we grow in godly character, we (1.) appreciate our eternal inheritance in heaven more and more, and (2.) live more and more in line with that hope, rather than just going with the flow of the world.

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AM Sermon: The Peace We Need in 2026

Luke 2:13-21

Main Point:

I. The passage

II. The idea of peace

III. The peace we need:

(1.) Peace with _____

(2.) Peace within _____

(3.) Peace in our _____

(4.) Peace with _____

(5.) Peace in _____

(6.) Peace between _____



Christmas Giving

We collected \$150 for Mike Christ, \$285 for Saron Mack, and \$270 for the Baltimore Rescue Mission

Given to Mike Christ

In Memory Of:

Mary Akers
Ed Dorn
Our Parents
Dennis and Hazel Hedrick

Given By:

Larry Akers and family
Lorna Dorn
Bill and Meg Fornoff
Marie and Truitt Reid

In Honor Of:

Verla Evans

Given By:

Your Secret Pal

Given to Saron Mack

In Memory Of:

Mary Akers
Ed Dorn
Timothy Eder
Charlotte Langford
Our Parents
Jim and Essie Reid
Our son, Timothy

Given By:

Larry Akers and family
Lorna Dorn
Almea Eder
Deb Eiche
Bill and Meg Fornoff
Truitt and Marie Reid
Cliff and Kathy Voris

In Honor Of:

Verla Evans
Robyn Smith

Given By:

Your Secret Pal
Your Secret Pal



Given to the Baltimore Rescue Mission

In Memory Of:

Mary Akers

Laura C. Burman

Jean and Tom Bermel

Donna and Charles Burman

Dana Caro, Sr.

Pat and Raleigh Holt

Jim Evans

Tony and Sis Faby

Betty Jane Farrington

Rush Fletcher

Jim Smith

Bill McCartin

Given By:

The Bob Burman Sr. Family
Bob Sr., Sarah & Dana; Bob Jr., Rachael, & Alex; & Anna & Chris

The Bob Burman Sr. Family

The Bob Burman Sr. Family

Dana and Sarah Caro

The Bob Burman Sr. Family

In Memory Of:

Larry Akers

Bob Burman, Sr.

Betty Allred

Eunice Caro

Jenn Evans

Remona Fletcher

Anita Gearhart

Bev Herbert

Tina Holmes

Sallye Hoover

Shannon Lewis

Pat McCartin

Ken and Doris Miller

Joan Snyder

Arnold Wyatt

Given By:

Sarah Caro
Sarah & Dana; Bob Jr., Rachael, & Alex; and Anna & Chris

Sarah Caro

Dana and Sarah Caro

The Bob Burman Sr. Family

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