

# Joyful Word



## 2024 In Retrospect



*WRITTEN BY: MINISTER YOLANDA MITCHELL*

**As 2024 draws to a close, it's a time of reflecting how we at The Church of God of East New York have experienced amazing achievements and some significant challenges.**

**The Year began with a 21-day Church wide Consecration of Prayer and Exhortations with a focus on The Names and Character of God. Throughout the year we participated in the Pastor Prayer Summit, Chat and Chew where we enjoyed a time of meeting guests and enjoying food and fellowship. In the Month of March, which is dubbed "Women's Month," congregations across the nation were encouraged to invite women into the Pulpit for the PreachHer event. We were blessed to have Rev. Laverne Mitchell as our guest speaker. In April the Presiding Elder of the National Association of the Church of God, Rev. Clifton McDowell was a guest speaker at the Convention in Jamaica, West Indies.**

**Other events and anniversaries observed was the observance of Servants Day, ENYGA Good Friday Service, The Men, Women and Children Day, Back to School Barbecue, The Worship in the Arts Program and Baptism.**

**We were blessed to introduce new initiatives such as CarePortal (supporting families in need), the Pop Up Shop, (vendors able to display and sell items), Hope Day and a Radio Podcast.**

**And we look forward to 2025!**

# 43rd Church Anniversary

*WRITTEN BY: ALETHIA DAVIS*

On October 27, 2024, Pastor Clifton McDowell Sr. and Lady Deborah McDowell celebrated their 43rd Pastoral Anniversary. For 43 years, they have faithfully and consistently led and served the Church of God of East New York. Studies show that the average length of time that a pastor stays at a single church is around four years. So, the fact that the Church of God of East New York celebrated 43 years is quite a milestone that needed to be celebrated.

Through the use of dance, singing and the dynamic preaching by Reverend Dr. James W. Lewis, we were reminded of what 43 years of service looks like with the theme "Purposely Supported to Serve." We remain thankful for our Pastor and First Lady, who have both remained faithful throughout the years, and to the calling that has been bestowed upon them. Pastor and Lady D, the Church of God of East New York salutes you and we thank God for your leadership and dedication throughout the years.

## Thanksgiving

*WRITTEN BY: GABRIELLE HUGGINS*

Thanksgiving originated as a harvest feast in 1621, when Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts celebrated with the Wampanoag Native Americans. The holiday became an annual tradition in some colonies. Thanksgiving became an official holiday because President Abraham Lincoln was trying to improve the relationship between the northern and southern states in 1863. In 1862, 38 Dakota-Sioux Native Americans were hanged under Lincoln's presidency because they chose to fight back against corrupt federal agents. In an attempt to wager peace with the Natives, Lincoln felt Thanksgiving would bridge that gap. Later down the line, the holiday was observed on different dates in November. It was made official that Thanksgiving would be nationally celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939.

Many Native American activists and scholars have pointed out that the traditional narrative of a friendly feast between Pilgrims and Indigenous people glosses over the violent history of colonization, displacement, and loss of lives. As a result, some people, especially within Native communities, have reframed the day as a time for "National Day of Mourning" or "Un-Thanksgiving" to honor Indigenous history and raise awareness of ongoing issues. With knowledge of the holiday's dark history, it has shifted the perspective of some to shy away from the term "Thanksgiving" or to approach the holiday with more reflection and awareness.

Annually, we have a one hour morning service on Thanksgiving. This year, the Pastor chose two individuals, Bro. Dwight Williams and myself, to do ten-minute exhortations. I spoke on the theme "Why be thankful?" Often, we get caught up in our day-to-day challenges and complain about what we don't have, but forget we should be thankful for what we do have. It is quick to make a fuss about our struggles and what we're lacking. I spoke on shifting that perspective and instead, thanking God for all that He has given us thus far and what is to come. Bro. Dwight spoke on the theme "Why stay thankful?" There is much for us to be thankful for in the moment of answered prayers, but we lose sight of how quickly things can be taken away. We must not fail to remember to continue being thankful and grateful even after we have been blessed.

# The Impact of Screen Time In our Lives

WRITTEN BY: CAMILLE CUNNINGHAM

Excessive screen time poses several dangers, impacting both physical and mental health. Prolonged exposure to screens can lead to a range of physical issues, including eye strain, headaches, and disrupted sleep patterns due to blue light exposure. Sedentary behavior linked to extended screen use increases the risk of obesity and cardiovascular diseases by promoting a lack of physical activity.

Mentally, excessive screen time can contribute to anxiety, depression, and decreased attention span. Social interactions may decline as individuals become more engrossed in their devices, leading to feelings of isolation. Additionally, overexposure to negative online content can distort perceptions of reality and heighten stress.

For children, too much screen time can hinder cognitive development and learning, as it limits opportunities for hands-on experiences and socialization. Balancing screen use with physical activity and face-to-face interactions is crucial for overall well-being.



## Resources

- 1) *Common Sense Media* for age-appropriate Media ratings.
- 2) *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* for screen time guidelines based on age.
- 3) *The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)* for information on screen time and mental health.

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PROVIDED BY: DAVID CUNNINGHAM

*"A church had a picnic and invited the entire community to come. The Pastor placed a basket full of apples on one end of a table with a sign saying, "Take only one apple please - Remember that God is watching."*

*On the other end of the table was a plate of cookies where one of the children had placed a sign saying, "Take all the cookies you want -- God is watching the apples."*

**PROVIDED BY: REV. CHARAS EBRON**

**Dear God,**

**Today I want to ask for Your protection and blessing for my Christian sisters and brothers around the world.**

**Please give us all wisdom and guidance and surround us with Your guardian angels.**

**For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. Psalm 91:11**

**I pray for my Christian brothers and sisters, for pastors, for missionaries; for Christians in governments; for parents and teachers; for medical, social and relief workers; for every Christian that is doing Your work, Your will, and Your ministry.**

**I lift them up to You, as their responsibilities are great. Please block Satan's attempts to harm and deceive us.**

**Please help us to stay focused on the tasks and the work to which You have called us.**

**Lord Jesus, we are eager to receive Your power and to be Your witnesses as Jesus taught us.**

**"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

**Acts 1:8**

**Thank You that we have the privilege to be Your witnesses today and every day. In the powerful name of Jesus I pray, Amen.**



**\*PLEASE SEND ANY COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO  
NEWSLETTER@COG-ENY.COM**