



MERRY CHRISTMAS--2019

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...FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS

DON'T BE AFRAID

I am told that the phrase "**Don't be afraid**" appears 365 times in the entire Bible...once for every day in the year. I am especially aware this year of how many times it pops up in the Christmas story.



When the angel first appeared to **Mary**, she was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what was happening. But the angel said to her, "**Don't be afraid,**" and then went on to explain what God had in mind for her life. I would think that Mary was comforted by those words many times as she agreed to the task of parenting the Son of God.



Joseph was trying hard to put a plan into action that would not embarrass either Mary's family or his own. While he was still grappling with the problem, the angel also came to him and gave him this message: "**Don't be afraid** to take Mary into your home as your wife..." When Joseph woke up, he obeyed and took on the task of being step-father to the Son of God.



There were **shepherds** who lived out in the fields close to Bethlehem. As they sat around a fire watching the sheep, a bright light shined in the sky, nearly scaring them to death! Once again, the angel greets them with, "**Don't be afraid.**" After hearing the good news, the men bravely set out to see the Son of God, and then told the story all around town.



The **Magi** from the East didn't have an angel. They followed a star. When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jewish scholars told them where the New King was to be born, so they continued their journey, led by the star, until they found the young child with his mother. After giving him their gifts, they were warned in a dream to go home a different route. Heeding the warning, they were **not afraid** to defy the king in order to protect the baby.

Mary was young; **Joseph** was older. The **Shepherds** were poor; the **Magi** were rich. God's work needs the help of people across every spectrum. Whatever the call of God looks like in individual lives, it is always followed by His assurance: "**BE NOT AFRAID, FOR I AM WITH YOU.**"

MUSIC has been an important part of the Christmas season since day one. Luke tells us that "... a multitude of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'" (2:13-14). We don't hear the angels sing these days, but **MUSIC** continues in different forms: church choirs, cantatas, carolers, CD's, YouTube, downloads, videos, and live performances.

MUSIC is important to the Romanians also, and, like us, they have many ways to sing God's praises. Below is a pictorial collection of some of their musical variety.



PRAYER AND PRAISES

PRAYER NEEDS:

- **WISDOM** for us as we continue to advise Romanian ministers of the urgency of making disciples.
- **COURAGE** for Romanian ministers to remain faithful to God, even as liberalism creeps in through new European Union laws and regulations.
- **DETERMINATION** for Romanian Christians as they assume more and more responsibility for the upkeep of their churches, and support of their ministers.

PRAISES:

- We continue to be aware that for our ages, we are in relatively good health. We also have wonderful health care close by.
- We are also aware of the many support people who have made **MISSION CONNECT** successful for the past 19 years. Accountants, board members, advisors, supporters, encouragers, and a host of others. Thank you!

From MISSION CONNECT to YOU: We wish you a wonderful holiday season, filled with pleasant times together with your family and worshipful times with God.