



## From the Heart of the First Lady

### All Aboard!!!

**Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV) Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

### Ma'am, May I See Your Ticket?

Happy New Year! As many of you may have resolutions, special goals, dreams or desires that you are believing GOD for this year, no doubt you have mapped out a course to reach your destination. I am also expecting GOD to do amazing things throughout this Jubilee Year as I consider the months ahead. A wise person once told me that pastoring a church is no different than driving a bus or conducting a train. Our route is clearly defined by the Great Commissioner and is non-negotiable (*Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV) And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*)

At times it will be scenic and picturesque, while other occasions may be bumpy as we have to traverse over potholes or warped tracks. Mostly we roll full-steam-ahead in keeping with our tight schedule, but will occasionally have to make stops along the way. The primary purpose of the stops is to pick up as many new passengers as we can who are headed in the direction we're going (*2 Peter 3:9-10 (NLT) The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.*)

Throughout the journey, many people will come along for the ride; but not all are booked to go the entire distance with us. Our task may simply be to get them to their next stop. When the enemy tries to derail us, our anti-swerve systems kick in – keeping everyone aboard safe (*Proverbs 4:25-27 (NIV) Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.*)

Occasionally, vagabonds will sneak onboard without paying the fare; but are soon exposed and invited to pay the price or be ejected (*Galatians 2:4-5 (NIV) [This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.*)

When all is said and done, our primary objective is to get the bus or train to the final destination with everyone onboard intact as we are ultimately held accountable for the well-being of the vehicle and all of the passengers (*Hebrews 13:17 (NIV) Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*)

This has never resonated with me more than when my husband and I first took the wheel of Neabsc. Now that the church has set out to build the new facility, this is even more relevant. Our route and destination have not changed – we're simply upgrading our means of transportation for a different model – one that can accommodate additional passengers while offering a more enjoyable ride for our existing ones. This upgrade will provide us with practical comforts that we can enjoy long-term, while being easy to maintain. We pray for a smooth ride, but are resolved not to be shaken by a little turbulence during this season of transition. Ultimately, we trust GOD's Word and His faithfulness to keep us on track.

As with any new vehicle, it will take time to adjust to the different features and some training may be required to handle it effectively. At the LORD's leading, we may be called upon to do some things slightly differently based on the new model; but rest assured He has not called us to do anything beyond our ability to handle it.

Realizing that no vessel assembles and operates itself, we depend on each of you and are eternally grateful for all you have done and are currently doing to get us down the road to our destiny. It has been a wonderful ride so far, and as your First Lady, I am so excited about the direction this proverbial vessel is headed. Pastor and I want to take all of you as far on this journey with us as you can go. And we want to do our part to help you enlarge your capacity to receive all the awesome things GOD has for you in this Jubilee Year.

So whatever you are believing GOD for in 2017, just know that I am thrilled to be riding along with you and look forward to helping you reach your destination. With that said... Ma'am, may I please see your ticket?

Prayer: Mighty God, thank you for all that you've allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every day. We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you open doors needing to be opened and close the ones needing to be shut tight. To you be glory and honor, in this New Year, and forever. Amen.