

Seeking Out

The Old Paths

Volume 10 Issue 12

December 2004

The Birth Of Jesus

Shopping, wrapping gifts, running from store to store, Christmas cards to address, more shopping, gifts to mail, waiting in long lines, food to prepare, trying to find a place to park at the mall so as not to walk a mile, more shopping for last minute things you forgot, taking something for a headache, soaking your sore feet.

Sound familiar? Do you get caught up in the merriment of Christmas and miss the whole purpose of why this day is celebrated? Take the time to remember that Christ is the reason for Christmas.

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage

of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

There were shepherds abiding in the field watching over their flock by night. Suddenly, God’s angel came upon them, and God’s glory shone around them. They were sore afraid. The angel said, “Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly

host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

Luke 2:1-20

“We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good.” Numbers 10:29

Dryden Road
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 3201 Dryden Road
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday School - 10 A.M.

Morning Worship - 11 A.M.

Evangelistic Service - 6 P.M.

TUESDAY

Youth Service - 7:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY

Prayer Service - 10 A.M.

THURSDAY

Family Service - 7:30 P.M.

“Where A Warm
 Welcome Awaits You...
 In This Church We
 Teach Holiness Too...”

Pastor
 Bennie D. Sutherland
 Editor
 Frank Lindsey

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Around Home

Prayer List

Please remember the following people in our church who need a touch from the Lord.

Patsy Roberts, Verna Williams, Edna Pelfrey, Demia Abner, Vee McElhaney, Rebecca Lakes, Bessie Richmond, Jean Sheldon, Evelyn Houston, Donna Maggard, Mabel Wells, Willidean Curtis, Opal Houston, Odie Boggs, Sharon Whitley, Rachel Thompson, Flodie Baldwin, Ruby Gullette, Carl DuHamel, Steve Phillips, Carl Henson, and Ray Driscoll.

Thank you for your contributions for the Thanksgiving baskets, and the Christmas gifts for the children. Your giving is greatly appreciated.

Brother Gary Scott



December Birthdays

Viola Alexander	1
Dorothy Hasty.....	1
Kaitlyn Smith	3
Elizabeth Maggard	6
Tina Hasty.....	6
Charles Dalton	6
Leah Meyers	7
Larry Taylor	7
Mabel Wells	8
Ben Templeton.....	9
Danny Tussey.....	9
Joe Bill Houston.....	10
Doug Joseph	11
Todd Hall	12
Connie Witt	16
Landen Shockley	18
Whitney Ward	21
Steve Griffitts	21
Martha Combs.....	22
Becky Swafford.....	22
Bessie Richmond	25
Bridgett Hasty	26
Rodney Boyd	28
Robert Dotson	28
Alison Liette	29
Beverly Havens	30
Elizabeth Travis.....	31
Phillip Hoskins Jr.	31

Anniversaries

Leonard & Mildred Witt.....	2
Cary & Sandy Tussey.....	5
Question & Tonya Hibbitts ...	10
Todd & Karan Hatcher	21
Howard & Nona Rains	24
Ken & Donna Maggard	28

Some businessmen are saying that this could be the greatest Christmas ever. I always thought that the first one was.

'Twas A Special Christmas Eve!

'Twas A special Christmas Eve,
And I was lying in my bed,
When I started to remembering,
The scriptures my Daddy read.
Ah, sitting there on his lap,
In the circle of his arm,
I felt so sheltered, cozy, and warm!

He had lovingly opened,
God's Holy book,
To St. Luke the second chapter,
Where we both took a look!
There unfolding before us,
Was the blessed Christmas story,
About angels singing to the shepherds,
"To God be the glory,"
"Peace on earth and to all men goodwill!"
Their voices graced the night,
Which was peaceful and still!

When Daddy read about Christ's birthplace,
I could almost smell the hay,
And see Mary and Joseph hover,
Over the place where Jesus lay!
In my mind's eye I could see the wisemen,
Their precious gifts bring.
They had traveled from afar,
To see the Heavenly King!

Then, in St. Luke chapter twenty three,
Daddy read how Jesus died,
That whosoever will,
Could be cleansed 'neath the crimson tide!
This story was so touching.
It caused the teardrops to start.
So I cried, "Oh, Daddy,"
"I want to give Jesus my heart!"
So, right then and there,
I fell to my knees,
Crying, "Oh, Blessed Saviour,"
"Come into my heart please!"

Later, I was lying in my bed,
Feeling so good!
And though I expected Christmas gifts,
Like any child would,
I knew that greater than any present,
I would find under the tree,
Was the gift of salvation,
Which Jesus gave to me!

Robert F. Dotson © 2004

Children

One Sunday evening, I overheard my five-year-old daughter, Julie, practicing “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” a song she’d been rehearsing that morning in church for next week’s Christmas program. It was all I could do to suppress my laughter when, in place of “with angelic host proclaim,” Julie sang, “with the jelly toast proclaim.”

Along with the sheep, cow and donkey, our nativity scene now has a new animal. A plump little teddy bear sits in the hay paying tribute to Baby Jesus.

Our children will tell you this addition is quite scriptural. As a beginning reader, Billy was thrilled to be able to read the Christmas story from the Bible for our family advent devotions. Although the verses did not flow from one line to another, we enjoyed listening to him read.

One night Billy read: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear...”

“A bear?” my 3-year-old Nancy interrupted.

“We don’t have a bear in our manger,” 5-year-old Timmy said.

“Here, use mine,” offered Nancy, and she plopped her soft stuffed bear in the middle of the scene.

Then Billy continued to read: “... a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.”

After some last-minute Christmas shopping with her grandchildren, my friend was rushing them into the car when four-year-old Jason said, “Grandma, Susie has something in her pocket.” He reached in and pulled out a new red barrette.

Though she was tired, my friend knew it was important for Susie to put the item back where she had found it. They did just that. Later at the grocery store checkout, the clerk asked, “Have you kids been good today?”

“I’ve been very good,” replied Jason, “but my sister just robbed a store.”

My three-year-old son, Grant, told me he learned a new song in children’s church about goats on the mountain when Jesus was born. I hadn’t heard that one before, so I asked him to sing it. He began, “Goats tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Goats tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.”

Our children’s church, which I directed, was putting on a play for Christmas. As I began planning the music, I asked one of my daughters and another little boy if they would be willing to play two verses of “Silent Night” on their flutes. I had to laugh when the boy replied, “Mrs. Anderson, I only know the first verse.”

Adam, a bright-eyed 3-year-old, had been told of his German heritage. After church in early December, I asked him if he had a part in the Sunday school Christmas pageant.

“Yes,” he replied, his eyes filling with joy. “I am going to be a German shepherd!”

I did not realize just how closely my 18-month-old toddler had been listening to Christmas carols until she picked the peas off her plate, threw them on the floor, and said with an excited smile, “Peas on Earth.”

He came to pay a debt He did not owe.... because I owed a debt I could not pay.

Jesus is not to us as Christmas is to the world, here today and gone tomorrow.

Some people never come to church except for their baptism, their marriage, and their funeral, or when they’re hatched, matched, and dispatched.

A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.

THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

By now, you have probably noticed that in presenting our Christmas plays, we do not always follow a standard, traditional Christmas story. Most of our stories are not written entirely about the events and celebrations that take place during the month of December, but hopefully they do point you to the One we celebrate throughout the Christmas season. I like the words a songwriter wrote, "The best gift of all is Jesus - all through the year."

Up until 2004, we have tried to provide a variety of themes. However, because of many comments from the audience about our 2003 play, "Brand New Life", our presentation this year was a sequel to that story. When the idea was suggested, I had some mixed thoughts and feelings about it. I was uncertain about changing details, and carrying a story forward to the next year.

As one of the writers, I like to include the message of salvation; and I like to portray real life situations. In real life there are joyous times; but everybody doesn't get saved, sick people don't always get well, there's not always money in the bank, and "they" don't always "live happily ever after."

After thinking it over and praying about it, I finally came to the conclusion that it was the right thing to do. I talked with cast members from 2003 to see if they would be willing to do a sequel. The end result was our 2004 play, "The Best Gift of All."

I've been asked if there is going to be another sequel to this play. Well.....maybe I should have told Spike that when he prayed through he should ask everyone to wait right there while he went to get Hattie so they could pray her through. Then there would be no need to write another sequel! Seriously.....as far as I know, this is the final part to the story.

To the cast - I applaud you! You did a great job presenting the play! As the director, I know you sacrificed hours and hours memorizing lines, coming to practice, and making other preparations for the play. The story was written on paper, but it took you to make it come alive. Thank you for all your hard work! I sincerely appreciate your support and encouragement. Your support in words and deeds certainly made it worth my efforts. Thank you so very much for the nice gift. I want you to know that your friendship is a treasure.

To the spouses and families of our cast members - Thank you for being so cooperative while they spent time working on the play that took time away from you!

To the Junior Choir, the musicians, and vocalists - Thank you for the wonderful songs and all the work and time you put into practicing.

To the audience - Thank you for coming and for the positive responses we've received. Our work would have been in vain if no one had come to watch. Just the excitement and comments of our children have made it worth every minute that I spent over the past

year working on this program.

To all who assisted in any way - Thank you very much!

Lana Rank

The Christian home is the seedbed from which springs personal piety and much of the vitality of both church and state. Richard Baxter discovered this truth in a very practical way. As a young preacher he was called to a large parish composed primarily of people who seemed more interested in their social status than in understanding and obeying the Word of God.

Baxter was disturbed by the spiritual coldness of his parishioners and found his work extremely difficult. After much prayer and heart-searching to know the will of God, the young pastor was confident that he had received the answer. "I believe the way to save the church and this community," he said to a friend, "is to establish family altars in the homes of my members." He spent the next three years in visitation, earnestly pleading with his people to set aside a time each day for prayer and Bible study.

Soon his congregation began to catch fire with a new zeal for God. Those who rededicated their homes exerted such a strong spiritual influence that his church was revived and was being filled with sturdy saints and receptive hearts. His ministry became increasingly effective because many of his people had followed the example of the patriarch Joshua who declared unequivocally, "...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Twenty-Two Rules For Helping The Devil Kill The Church

1. Don't attend the services, except on Christmas and Easter Sunday.
2. If you do attend weekly, be a "oncer." Twicers are bad. Ask the jailor.
3. When you go, go in late, and go in state!
4. Attend other churches at least half the time. Don't be narrow.
5. Play "Safety First!" Once in a while the preacher hits. Use the pews in the rear.
6. Hunt a draft - sit in it - and growl about the ventilation.
7. Watch your watch. The preacher might have nothing but a calendar.
8. Go to sleep when the sermon begins - or, better yet, before. If you sleep where the preacher can't see you - snore! He may hear you!
9. Don't joyously sing! You'd look unnatural. Owls never sing.
10. Don't carry your Bible with you. You may appear religious.
11. Don't praise the sermon - it might bust the preacher's head.
12. Criticize the preacher - the organist - pianist - choir leader - associate pastor - the ushers - everybody but yourself.
13. Never give to the heathen. Such a gift might be used against you.
14. Don't speak to a stranger - he might drop dead.
15. Tell all the preacher's failings to your neighbors. It might be a stale tale, but they'll enjoy it.
16. Don't give too much, better yet don't give at all. You might have to spend your old age in the poor-house.
17. "Let the pastor earn his money." Why hire an associate.
18. Never accept an office - "Let George do it."
19. Should you see someone wake up, get off the roost to give the pastor a boost, howl about the church being run by a clique.
20. Above all, don't attend the prayer meeting. If you do, don't ever break the stillness with your voice.
21. Stir up a fuss of some kind. You just can't be happy without a muss.
22. Don't die. What would the devil ever do in the church without you?

L.S.B.

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