



# new life news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NEW LIFE CHURCH OF CHRIST DECEMBER 2018

## A Couple of Christmas Thoughts from Steve

One of the biggest themes of the Christmas passages in Luke is shame. Zechariah and Elizabeth were shamed by their culture for being barren. Mary & Joseph were shamed by their culture for having a child out of wedlock. The shepherds were considered to be marginal at best by their culture. (Actually shepherds were banned from testifying in court because they were thought to be unreliable, and since they continually allowed the sheep to eat grass in fields belonging to others; thus stealing the grass, they were considered serial thieves.) Yet God used Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, and even the lowly shepherds.

Actually the theme that Luke wants us to grasp is not shame itself, but that God is in the business of rescuing us in our shame and restoring us to a place of value. Zechariah & Elizabeth's shame is redeemed by the visit of the angel and the birth of the baby John. Consider that they went from being considered abandoned by God to a place of reverence as one of the few God spoke through and performed miracles in. Joseph and Mary had their shame redeemed by the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth and then later when Jesus became a well known Rabbi, Mary was esteemed by all as his mother.

We so often think of the baby in the manger and what God did for us in terms of coming here and becoming one of us. Let us also think about how God comes alongside people. People who are outcasts and misfits and the least in order to rescue and restore them. And our focus as His people is to also be reaching out to the least of these so that they can find rescue and restoration in the arms of God.

PS. One thought on my portrayal of Zechariah. We don't know how old Zechariah was when the angel appeared to him. What we do know is that Elizabeth was considered to be beyond child bearing age. I used the figure of 40 years of waiting which would make him about 60 and her around 53. Regardless of their exact age, the length of time waiting was significant. Throughout that entire time, however, God was in control. Even though Zechariah and Elizabeth didn't know it, God's plan was exactly on time. So it is for us as well. We don't know the details and/or the timing, but God does and HE has it all under control.

## Church Events

- Dec 8<sup>th</sup>  
**Sonshine Singers Rehearsal**  
@ 10:00a
- Dec 9<sup>th</sup>  
**Sonshine Singers**  
**Performance @ 6:00p**
- Dec 12<sup>th</sup>  
**Senior Moments Event @**  
**12:00p @ Der Dutchman**
- December 24<sup>th</sup>  
**Christmas Eve Service @**  
**6:00pm**
- December 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>  
**Office Closed**
- December 31<sup>st</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Office Closed**

## Christmas | HE IS HERE!

If we are honest, does anyone really enjoy waiting? The most common test of patience is everywhere, especially this time of year. You've seen the signs, "Please wait to be seated," "Please wait for the next available cashier," or even the sign that doesn't even use the word, but implies a wait with the words, "Line starts here." We wait around for all sorts of things throughout the year. We wait for hours to ride a twenty second thrill at an amusement park. We impatiently wait for the microwave to reheat our food. We even wait in traffic trying to reach our destination. A Timex survey from April 2017 indicated that we spend approximately six months of our lives waiting in line for things. To top it off, the average person spends about 43 days on hold with automated customer service in one lifetime. We have grown accustomed to waiting. Whether patiently or not, waiting is a part of life.

Things were not much different for God's people in ancient times. They had their fair share of waiting. Prophets waiting for the truth they proclaimed to be enacted. Abraham waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled. The Jews waited to be freed from their captivity in Egypt only to wonder in the desert. God's people waited for a king to lead them as a nation, and then for another to free them from their captivity. After years of wondering, wandering, and waiting, the promised Messiah had still not arrived.

It was a starry night in a little town called Bethlehem where the cries of God's people were answered in the cries of a newborn child. Prophecies and promises were fulfilled in the arrival of God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Some shepherds were watching their flocks that night when an angel brought them good news of great joy. They were told that a Savior had been born who was Christ the Lord. After the angels had left, the shepherds went to Bethlehem and proclaimed everything that the angel had told them and they left the stable in worship, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen. This Christmas season we join the shepherds in worship and proclaim that He is Here! Jesus Christ, the Savior is here!

**Join us on Christmas Sunday, December 23rd for our regularly scheduled worship gatherings and again on Monday, December 24th @ 6:00p for our Christmas Eve candlelight worship.** Come and join the angels in singing, "Glory to God in the highest" and celebrate the birth of Christ our Lord who came to bring hope, faith, joy, and peace to a waiting world.

~Ryan

While they were there the time came for the baby to be born and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. But the angel said to them "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you; you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Suddenly a great company 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.

Luke 1:6-14

Merry Christmas!! It's the holiday season and I hope and pray you have a joyous one. The kids are going to focusing on Christ as he is why we have Christmas. As the old phrase goes, "the reason for the season", but truly exploring what that means. Jr. Church is doing several lessons surrounding the birth of Christ while at C.I.A. we are making ornaments and watching "The Star" over the month of December. It is an animated birth of Christ story.

If you get a chance, check out the Christian Christmas tree located by the entrance of the kid's wing. The kids are working hard on making ornaments to decorate it and love being able to share it with you all. So, remember to slow down, take in the joys of the season, pray, worship and love!

Let Christmas be a reminder of what a good good father he is!

# December Birthdays



2 – Amy Beveridge

3 – David Shaffer

6 – Dianne Kehl, Darryl Jones, Bruce Snyder

10 – Eli Sharp

11 – Bryan Dawson, Jeff Shaffer

12 – Bill Bushong

15 – Jeremy Brown

23 – Hope Thompson

25 – Julie Clark

26 – Jacob Kindt

28 – Carolyn Awwiller

29 – Jackson Noe

30 – Jim Rockwell

31 – Jeff Dixon, Cyd McCready, Janet Ocheltree, Lorri Richards



Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.”

These are the opening lines from an Advent hymn written by Charles Wesley in 1744 called “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus.” It is a song that has been sung by countless Christians over the past couple of centuries as they prepared their hearts for focusing special attention to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; we remember His first Coming. But what is sometimes hard for us to wrap our minds around is that what is an historical past event to be remembered and celebrated for us was a future event that was anxiously expected by God’s people in the past. They knew the Messiah would come. They heard the prophecies and were awaiting the One that would deliver them from their enemies, atone for their sins and purify them as a people. They lived lives of expectation. We live in a sort of “in-between time.” Christ has come. He has delivered us from Satan, has atoned for our sins and has purified us as His people. But we have yet to realize the totality of this blessing. Our enemy is defeated, but he still roams around as a wounded lion, licking his wounds and is exceptionally aggressive because his end is near. Our sins are atoned for and we are washed in Christ’s blood, but we still struggle with our old man and very often find things in our nature that we wish were not there. We are still awaiting the fullness of our salvation: “[Our] citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.” [ **Ph 3:20**]

“[Christ] was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” [ **Heb 9:28**]

“[We] ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.” [ **Ro 8:23**]

As we wait for the second Coming of our Lord, I wonder if we live in expectancy. Are we eager for His return? Can we make the opening words of this hymn our prayer? “Come, Thou long expected Jesus. Come and set Thy people free. From our fears and sins release us. Let us find our rest in Thee.” “[Jesus], who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’

Amen. Come Lord, Jesus!

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.” [ **Rev 22:20-21**]

~Kyle

