

ON THE JOURNEY

As I've been reading devotionals this year, I came across one from Max Lucado that made some interesting points...if we would re-do the Christmas story today, how would it look? Would we use our modern day, Hollywood-style movie standards to make it more palatable, acceptable or interesting so people would read it? Lucado continues...

"A good public relations firm would move the birth to a big city. See what Roman palaces they might rent, what Greek villas they could lease. The Son of God deserves a royal entry. Less peasant, more pizzazz. Out with the heads of sheep, in with the heads of state. Shouldn't we ticker tape this event? Maybe throw in a little Trump Tower escalator entrance.

But we didn't design the hour. God did. And God was content to enter the world in the presence of sleepy sheep and a wide-eyed carpenter. No spotlights, just candlelight. No crowns, just cows chewing cud. God made so little of his Son's coming. No hoopla at his birth. Is this a mistake? Or is this the message?

Perhaps our world, and your life, resembles a Bethlehem stable. Crude in some spots, smelly in others. Not much glamour. Not always neat. People in your circle remind you of stable animals: grazing like sheep, stubborn like donkeys, and that cow in the corner looks a lot like the fellow next door.

The moment Mary touched God's face is the moment God made his case: there is no place he will not go. If he is willing to be born in a barnyard, then expect him to be at work anywhere – bars, bedrooms, boardrooms, and brothels. No place is too common. No person is too hardened. No distance is too far. There is no person he cannot reach. There is no limit to his love. When Christ was born, so was our hope.

Actually, I think we need Christmas more than ever this year. We could use a season that is dedicated to giving, not receiving; to caring, not critiquing. Put away our differences. Put up the Christmas tree. Take comfort in the familiar story and the ancient carols. Our world, like that of Bethlehem is difficult and crowded. Our days can feel as cold and uncertain as that midnight manger. Yet, in the midst of it all, let's do what Mary did. Let's invite the source of peace to enter our world. Let's find hope, once more, in the infant King. God became one of us so we could become one with him. That is the promise of Bethlehem."

I invite you to live large in this season of HOPE, PROMISE and LOVE.

Submitted by Robin Tahara Miller

CALENDAR

Wed 11/28	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	5:30 pm	Outreach Commission
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Sat 12/1	3:00 pm	Fundraiser for Tom & Eva Kurtz
Sun 12/2	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 12/3	5:00 pm	POPS Advisory Board
	6:00 pm	Worship Commission
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 12/4	6:30 pm	Commission Chair Mtg. w/Ike Walther
Wed 12/5	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:45 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Thur 12/6	6:30 pm	Board
Fri 12/7	6:00 pm	Ladies Night In
Sun 12/9	9:00 am	Phil Preaching

	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 12/10		Health Department
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 12/11	6:30 pm	Discipling Commission
Wed 12/12	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:30 pm	Administration Commission
	7:00 pm	Music Practice

Administrative Assistant Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-2:00 pm
Closed Friday

- **All newsletter submissions need to be in to Maribeth by noon on Tuesday.**

November/December Birthdays

Sharon Wyse – 28
 Jerry Beasley – 2
 Shena Yoder - 5

Sara Weaver – 8
Theo Outman – 8
Rich Yoder – 11
Levi Mast – 13
Lloyd Troyer – 14
Terry Rheinheimer – 15
Gary Miller – 16
Betty Birky – 17
Curt Troyer – 19
Bobbie Werker – 21
Loretta Troyer – 23
Fannie Hochstetler – 24
Wilbur Schlabach – 24
Kim Christner - 26

WORSHIP

Focus statement: The first voice of Advent that we hear is a voice that spoke hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. It is the voice of Isaiah the Prophet. As God's people faced great peril, fear, and uncertainty, and it was a most dreadful time to be alive, God sent them prophets to give them a message of hope for a future. Not everyone listened to the prophets, but to those who did, they found a message of hope that carried them through very perilous times.

Background scriptures: Isaiah 6-9

Coffee Prep Volunteers

This Sunday: Dave Graber
Next Sunday: Ward & Pam Bingaman

Welcome Center

This Sunday: Shari Graber
Next Sunday: Carolyn Miller

2018 Advent Theme

Our Advent Theme for this year is "Voices Around the Manger." Probably all of us, at some time or other, have been part of a conversation of those who have gathered around the crib of a newborn baby, peering down into the crib and carefully examining the features of the tiny face lying in the crib. And we have heard comments like, "She looks just like her mother," or "Oh, he has a head full of hair already," or "Look at those big blue eyes!" People are eager to see a newborn for the first time, and to comment about what they see in the newborn baby.

There were voices that surrounded the manger of our Lord when he was born, too. Join with me as we listen to these voices who spoke at the birth of our Savior.

Some of these voices were from afar, and some of them were near. Some of these voices were little more than a whisper, and some of the voices filled the heavens. But all of these voices have filled the hearts of worshippers for the past 2000 years. Come, let's listen carefully to these voices; let's listen to those who are speaking, and let's hear what it is that they have to say about this one, born and placed in a manger in Bethlehem so many years ago.

ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Report for November 25:

Money Given to Budget \$5,177.90
Amount Needed Weekly for Budget \$5,565.25
Year-to-date Money Given to Budget \$65,100.90
Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget \$72,348.25

COMMUNITY LIFE

Save the date- Women's Retreat will be on Feb. 8th and 9th. More information will follow at a later date.

Only a few more days until our Haystack Dinner/Silent Auction Fundraiser for Tom and Eva Kurtz. For those of you planning to VOLUNTEER, there are several opportunities to help out....

- 1.) Friday, November 30th beginning at 4 to ??, we will be chopping and dicing and the kitchen, setting up the silent auction area and decorating the hall. Please come whenever you can and stay as long as you can, every little bit helps.
- 2.) Saturday, December 1st beginning at 9 a.m. we will continue food preparation, set up newly donated items for the auction and start to arrange the bake sale area.
- 3.) Saturday beginning at noon we will begin heating the food, and setting up our Haystack Buffet line and desert area, preparing drinks, etc.. Doors will open at 3 p.m. and help with replenishing Food Supplies will be needed.
- 4.) Saturday evening beginning at 6 p.m. we will need a crew to help with cleanup and tear down and set up for Sunday School the following morning. Desserts and Bake Sale items can be dropped off at the church anytime, we will be there at 9 a.m. Saturday morning and would appreciate everything being brought in by noon.

And we sure could use a lot more items donated for the Silent Auction! Our original donation coordinator had a family emergency and was unable to follow through with her plans to procure a bounty of donations. Are you storing things at your home that you have not had use for, for some time, but that someone else may find valuable? Bring it to us, we would be happy to have it. You are only limited by your imagination!

Please consider how you can help us to make this a successful fundraiser for these members of our church family!

DISCIPLING

Bethany Christian Schools will hold Christmas concerts for grades 4-8 next week in the school's chapel. On Tuesday, Dec. 4, Beginning and Intermediate instrumental groups will perform at 6:30 p.m.; the middle school band and orchestra will perform at 7:30. On Thursday, Dec. 6, choral groups will perform at 7 p.m. The concerts are open to the public; there is no admission charge.

Bethany Christian Schools Alumni Night. Bethany alumni will receive free admission and be eligible for prizes at the boys and girls evening Holiday tourney basketball games on Saturday, Dec. 15. Girls game begins at 6:00 and boys at 7:30. Note, alumni night does not include the morning games of the Holiday Tourney.

OUTREACH

FMW's next project is collecting items for MCC hygiene kits. Contents (**new** items only) are 1 adult-sized toothbrush (in manufacturer's packaging), 1 large bar bath soap (leave in wrapper), 1 nail clipper (good quality), 1 hand towel (medium weight, dark or bright colors; approx. 16 in x 26 in), and 1 wide-toothed comb (6-8 in). They will also be putting together fruit plates for the shut-ins.

MCC Great Lakes is hosting an Engagement Day on December 8th at Belmont Mennonite Church located at 925 Oxford Street, Elkhart, IN 46516. Throughout the day MCC will showcase interactive learning tools around mass incarceration, Doctrine of Discovery and viewpoints of guns in America. The day will culminate

with a keynote address by Juan Sebastian Pacheco Lozano on Immigration. You are welcome to participate in one workshop or the whole day. This would be a great opportunity for small groups, youth groups or Sunday School classes to participate together. You can find more information at mcc.org/gl-engagement-day. Please direct any questions to Brooke Strayer at brookestrayer@mcc.org or 574-534-4133.

Give a kit for Christmas! From hurricanes and flooding to conflict and drought, MCC is responding to many disasters around the world. This Christmas, why not gather your family and pack a relief kit as a gift to other families whose lives have been disrupted by war or disaster? For more information about relief kit contents and how you can get involved, visit mcc.org/kits/relief.



