

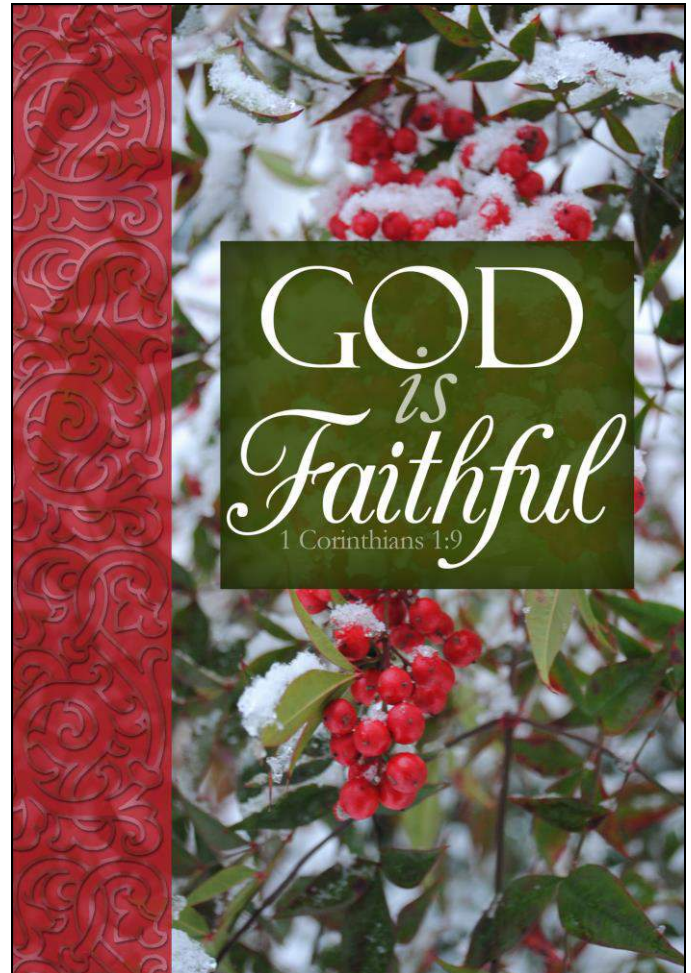
Be Alert, Get Busy, Calm Down!

By Daniel Mark

The news coming out of the Middle East in the past week has certainly set most people on edge across the globe. World events of such a nature are unsettling enough, but with a Middle Eastern context and especially involving the nation, Israel, it takes on a significantly different dimension. The reasons are noteworthy. The happenings of this tinderbox of the world typically prompt talks of the end of the world, the last days, the second advent of our Lord Jesus or something on the order of the apocalyptic scenarios of the Book of Revelations, the New Testament's last book, and one almost entirely given to events leading right into eternity!

Almost immediately from its founding, the Church, the Body of Christ, has been as concerned with the end times as it has been with the spreading of the Gospel. Matthew's Gospel in Chapter 24 records one of the most explicit accountings of end-time events outside of Revelations and the Old Testament prophetic book, Daniel. As a matter of fact, much of Jesus' explanation in the chapter is heavily rooted in Daniel's prophecy of the end of the age and covering the death, resurrection, and reign of the Messiah for all eternity.

The Olivet Discourse of our Lord is a must for understanding our day and age as it details the fate and future of the world from God's determination. Israel is rightly seen as a prophetic time clock because virtually every prophecy of Scripture, one way or another, directly or indirectly involves this one tiny nation. What happens then to this nation must claim our most serious attention. Yet, God would have us not to panic or be apprehensive. Jesus tells us that God's saints have absolutely



no reason for fears and anxieties. Believers throughout the ages have been on the alert with all kinds of anticipatory bizarre attitudes, exactly what the Lord warned against. These attitudes and acting have caused much disillusionment and despair within the Body of Christ. As Christ followers our mindsets should be those of a holy alertness without the despair of fear and unfulfilled expectations.

Before His ascension to heaven, the disciples gathered around the Lord and wondered when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel, the Jewish nation. The question substantively resonated, but timewise, it was off. Jesus told them it was not for them to know the time or timing, only known to God, but their preoccupation and mission for the hour must

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“Be Alert, Get Busy,” continued...

be the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom. It is the message and assignment of the church to make known the full counsels of God to the rest of the world. It is this imperative that we must primarily focus on even as we wait the return of the Son of God because the preaching of the Gospel is linked to the Kingdom of God and Jesus’ re-entry into the world.

The New Testament commands believers to adopt two attitudes concerning our Lord’s return. The first has already been expanded on, and it’s the Great Commission and its spread. Secondly, all believers strive, by God’s grace, to be as unspotted from the world as God would have us be. The Apostle John, in his first epistle, writes of the Lord’s return in Chapter 3 and tells us about the glorious prospect of seeing our Lord and being like Him! John further tells us that a life of purity and holiness ought to be our habit without reading prophetic interpretations into every global crisis.

We are ready to meet the Lord Jesus when we busy ourselves with God’s priorities of the Kingdom and leading lives of holiness and righteousness unto the Lord!

**Christmas Special
December 10**

Please plan to stay after church on Sunday, December 10, and enjoy the Childrens’ presentation of The Christmas Story at 11:00 am.

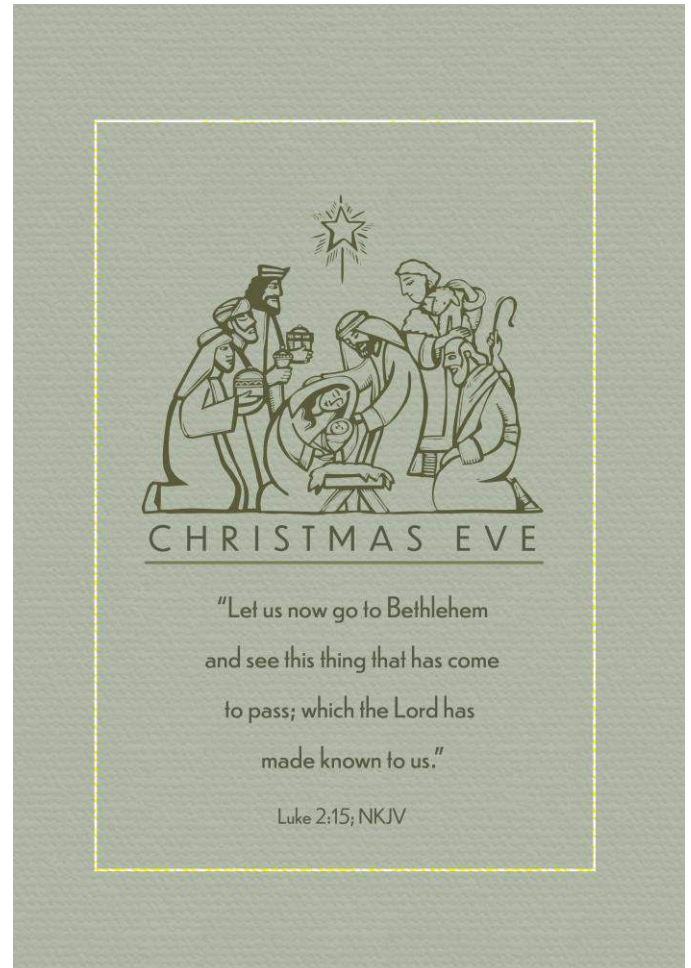


Refreshments and fellowship will be available after the presentation.

**“Be faithful in the little practices of love which will build in you the life of holiness and make you Christlike.”
Mother Teresa**

**Christmas Eve
Service at 7 PM**

Please join us as we joyously celebrate our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service on Sunday, December 24, at 7:00 pm. We will have a Lessons and Carols service with Scripture readings and music that highlight the Christmas story. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the incarnation of our Savior!



Elders' Corner

By Pastor Andy Straubel

I love the holidays, from Thanksgiving through New Year! I especially delight in the themes of Christmas: hope, peace, joy, love, and faith. Melissa Kruger has written a wonderful new devotional, "The Weary World Rejoices." It is recommended and published by the Gospel Coalition and well worth checking out. Truly, the world is weary! But we make the decisive choice to rejoice.

Isaiah 9:1-7 says, "*Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress...the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.*" We know that light is Jesus Christ. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Verse 7 ends, "*The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish it.*" At the time of Isaiah's writing this Messiah figure was merely anticipated. Believers today have two thousand plus years of history and experience. "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we have seen his glory*" (John 1:14), a worthy goal at Christmas.

Join us as we celebrate Christmas Eve, with our traditional candlelight service at 7:00pm. On December 14, women will be having a Cookie Exchange at 7-8:30 pm at the Straubels' house. While the world may be "weary," may we all rejoice! On behalf of Janice and I, may we wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Please continue to pray for Windsor Chapel, the leadership, and the Good News of the Gospel to go forth with power.

"The Bible without the Holy Spirit is a sundial by moonlight."

Dwight L. Moody

Perisseia Christmas Cookie Exchange

Thursday, December 14, 7:00-8:30, at the Straubels' home, 691 Hughes Drive, Hamilton Square 08690

All women are welcome! This is a time of fun and fellowship
Please come—and bring a guest—even if you haven't participated in Perisseia.

Instructions:

Bake your favorite Christmas treats, Package them in sets of 6 in labeled Ziploc bags. Bring as many bags as you would like to exchange, plus one additional bag as refreshment contribution.

Please feel free to come to enjoy the fellowship even if you don't want to bake and participate in the exchange.

For More Information

Please contact

Cindy Bills

cynthiabills@gmail.com

609-275-8557





Happy Birthday!

Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Tatiana Morozova	December 4
Brenna Herrity	December 9
Bryan Westbrook	December 9
Bridget Bernheisel	December 10
Steve Masticola	December 15
Kentaro Yamamoto	December 16
Ethan Ventura	December 17
Ed MacQueen	December 18
Larry Berrill, Jr.	December 24
Charles Muldrow	December 27



Work Day On December 2



Our Work Day has been rescheduled for Saturday, December 2, from 9:00 am to noon. Please join us for some healthy exercise as we spruce up our grounds in preparation for the upcoming holidays. We'll be picking up fallen branches, raking up the remaining leaves and transporting them to the curb. Bring rakes, tarps, gloves, etc., if you can. Hot coffee and donuts will be provided! The Boy Scouts will be assisting us. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Harvest Party



Further Up and Further In

Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in and among us



By Cindy Bills

Christmas Spirit

Early December generally finds us in full anticipation mode. Christmas is coming! We purchase gifts, decorate our homes, plan special meals, and prepare for parties. 'Tis the season to be merry and bright....

And then, if and when we dare, we look at the news. Wars and rumors of wars. Displaced migrants. Human trafficking. Natural disasters: earthquakes, volcanoes erupting, hurricanes and tornadoes. Suffering of unimaginable depth and endless duration.

Christmas seems incongruous in our world today. It can feel inappropriate and even callous to celebrate Christmas in light of the suffering in today's world. But I believe that that is exactly the point of Christmas, and precisely why it is so important to celebrate.

Jesus was born more than 2000 years ago. Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire, known for its authoritarian government which relied on brute strength and cruelty to maintain peace. It was a dark time of fear and suffering.

Madeline L'Engle writes these words as part of a poem celebrating the Incarnation:

*This is no time for a child to be born,
With the earth betrayed by war & hate....
That was no time for a child to be born
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;*

And yet the Bible tells us that Jesus was born as God Incarnate "in the fullness of time." During a time of brutality, hardship, and suffering, the glory of God shined down from

heaven, and a host of angels celebrated in giving glory to God. God became Incarnate man and dwelt among men. Sin and suffering did not evaporate: Jesus lived and breathed in the trenches and in the wreckage caused by the fall.

And so, some 2000 years later, we mark the greatest event in human history. And by all appearances, mankind has not made much progress in the centuries between then and now. Suffering continues. Many people live in hopelessness and desperation. We are reminded, again, of our need for the Messiah.

The Messiah has come, and He is coming again! This is worth celebrating! We are called to manifest Christ, to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with our God. Marking the Incarnation and anticipating Christ's return represents the sure foundation upon which we can fulfill that calling. A wholehearted Christmas celebration is exactly what this world needs. May the light of Christ—and our celebration of His birth—shine in the darkness....

Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557) or cynthialbills@gmail.com to continue the dialogue....

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 that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:8-12





The Undeserved Gift

By Janet Berrill

Do you ever pay close attention to what advertisements say? Their goal is to get you to buy their product, and they do that in many ways. One way is to tell you that you deserve to have whatever it is that they are selling. And since you deserve it, you should go out and buy it.

I am reminded of a commercial from the 80's with Jamie Farr (actor from the TV show M*A*S*H). In this commercial, he says that he's sure you did something good today, and therefore you deserve a MARS candy bar. After all, "You deserve the best!" he further adds. And just this month, I've been hearing a commercial from Dunkin' Donuts that says, "Making it to Wednesday, you deserve a reward." How absurd! We have nothing to do with the passage of days, yet Dunkin' Donuts wants you to feel that you deserve something good because it is now Wednesday. So go to Dunkin' Donuts on Wednesday and get your reward (while spending your money).

Christmas is no exception. Children are taught that if they are good, Santa will bring them presents. Remember, Santa is watching and is making a list of the naughty and the nice children. So if you want Santa to bring you presents, you need to be nice to your sister, clean your room, share your toys, etc. You are only going to get presents if you deserve them.

I am so thankful that this is not how God operates! God does not give us good things because we deserve them. If this is how He operated, not a single person would ever receive anything good from God! Romans 5:6, 8, 10 says we were as sinners, ungodly, and God's enemies. Yet God chose to give us the gift of Jesus, His precious Son. He sent Jesus to this world to be born as a human, to live

among us so that we could know God better, and to die for our sins. Why, if we were God's enemies, did God give us the gift of Jesus? We did nothing to deserve His gift, on the contrary, we did things that made us not deserve His gift. The answer is simple: because He loves us! His love is so great that He gave us His beloved Son. There was nothing greater that He could give. We did nothing to deserve this, yet God gave His precious Son as a gift to us anyway.

Most of us have been around for a lot of Christmases. We've heard the story of Jesus' birth countless times. We've heard it so often that the wonder of it can get lost. My prayer for myself and for you is that this year we would have a renewed perspective on the magnitude of the gift God gave us when Jesus was born and how God showed us how much He loves us by giving us such a great gift of which we are so undeserving.

Financial Update

(Through October 31, 2023)

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$122,520	\$182,500
Expense	\$184,582	\$182,596

Windsor Chapel has sent \$17,831 to our missionary partners this year. That is 15% of your giving!

If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:

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