

## The Guiding Star

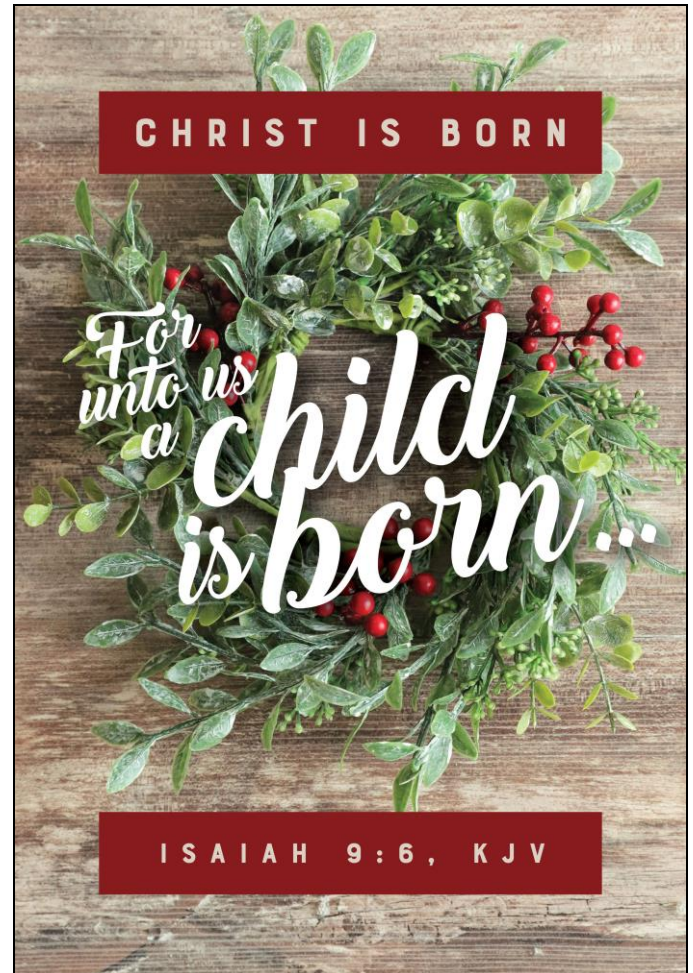
By Ansu John

"I know not the way God leads me, but well do I know my guide." – Martin Luther

One of the things I enjoy doing is to look up to the clear night sky and gaze at the stars. It brings back memories from my childhood when my brother and I used to go up on our rooftop terrace and look at the beautiful night sky. We used to challenge each other to spot the planets and count out loud the stars—a never-ending task which was fun as we tried to come up with higher numbers than the other person. The moonlit, starry nights also remind me of the wise men who observed a special star in the sky and took action in pursuing that heavenly vision.

At the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wise men from the East set on a journey after seeing an unusual star in the sky. They first went to the palace of King Herod in Jerusalem, thinking that they were going to pay homage to the newborn king of Israel. They were very excited to share this wonderful news, yet to their surprise their visit seemed only to trouble King Herod and all the people in the city. The king immediately gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, who helped identify from the Scriptures that Bethlehem would be the birthplace where Christ or the Messiah would be born. As the wise men went to Bethlehem, strangely, no one else showed any enthusiasm in taking the journey with them in search of their promised Messiah.

The responses of the king and the people of Jerusalem may have made the wise men wonder about the relevance of their long and hard journey. Perplexed as they may have been, they didn't give up but rather resumed their journey. A great shift occurred when they looked up again and saw the marvelous sight that the star they had seen in the East was still



up in the sky. Though they had lost sight of it briefly, the star had never lost track of them.

*"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy."* – Matthew 2:10 (NKJV)

The sight of the star brought back a renewed purpose and meaning to their journey. They might have felt that the star shone even brighter with God's love, care, and affirmation. Though those who should have joined them in the journey to Bethlehem were not present, God had been with them all throughout their journey. The star led them to where the young Child was and stood over that place. Yes, the star guided them to the right place, among the many houses, inns and mangers in Bethlehem. How awesome it is to know and

**Continued on page 2...**



## "The Guiding Star," continued...

experience heaven standing with you – helping, guiding, and lighting your way.

*"God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God."* – Psalm 53:2 (NLT)

We can learn from the wise men that those who respond to God's heavenly call and seek Him will always find Him. The star led them to the Lord, who Himself is the Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16). Jesus alone gives hope to those wandering in darkness, not knowing the way. Through Him we experience the amazing love of God filling our hearts with everlasting hope.

Even at times when we lose sight of the way, God never loses sight of us. We can count on Him to watch over us, to lead us, and to guide us all the way! As you look up to Him today, may He fill your heart with exceedingly great joy – as His divine presence leads and guides you to your right destination. Merry Christmas!

## Financial Update

(Through October 31, 2025)

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$98,491	\$120,000
Expense	\$109,953	\$120,000

## Benevolence Fund Giving October to November 16: \$3735

*"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"*  
Philippians 4:19  
Praise God!



## Christmas Presentation and Potluck Luncheon

Celebrate the joy of the season with us after the service on Sunday, December 14, as our children's Sunday School class performs a delightful Christmas presentation sharing the story of Jesus' birth.



Following the presentation, everyone is invited to stay for a festive potluck luncheon downstairs. Please consider bringing a main dish or dessert to share. Enjoy a wonderful time with good food, warm fellowship, and holiday cheer. Don't miss this special time together as our children help remind us of the true meaning of Christmas!



## Christmas Eve Service at 7 PM

Please join us as we joyously celebrate our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service on Wednesday, December 24, at 7:00 pm. This beautiful Lessons and Carols service will include Scripture readings and music that highlight the Christmas story. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the incarnation of our Savior! All are welcome. Bring your family, friends and neighbors, and come and share this joyous night of worship and praise!

## Elders' Corner

By Darrell S. Bernheisel

Over the past twenty months, I've written in these pages about **trust** (March 2024), **hope** (November 2024), and **courage** (April 2025). My most recent article (July 2025) celebrated the hiring of Pastor Jame and reminded us of our Biblical call to use our gifts to fulfill God's purposes in our church and community.

Those first three messages were written to encourage us during a season of trials without a pastor. The last was a bookend, a call to prepare for the work ahead. Now, as we turn a new page in our church's history and at the time of this writing, approaching Thanksgiving, I find myself humbled and deeply thankful for all that God has done during this time. This article is about **gratitude**—because nothing is too small to notice and give thanks for.

In Psalm 100:4 we read: *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name."*

For those that don't know, the Elder Board meets weekly on Tuesday evenings. Each meeting begins and ends with prayer. Since becoming an Elder, I've noticed my prayers often start with thanksgiving. I love focusing on the smallest and simplest things. It fills me with joy to reflect and give thanks. Here are just a few examples: the beating of our hearts, the wonder of our seeing eyes, the air in our lungs, the hearing of our ears, the blueness of the sky, the leaves blown across the green grass, the warmth of our bed, the ability of our mind to think and create, the spouse we love, the kids we adore, the time to relax, the ability to work, the church body, and the small miracles we celebrate.

Psychological research confirms what Scripture has long taught: gratitude focuses

our attention on the present. It helps us avoid dwelling on past hurts or worrying about future uncertainties. In fact, it's nearly impossible to be truly grateful and deeply despondent at the same time. Those emotions are mutually exclusive. The Apostle Paul understood this truth long before modern psychology. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 he writes: *"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* Notice Paul says *in everything*—not because everything is good, but because in all circumstances we can trust God's sovereignty and goodness.

It's not easy to be thankful when you've had a bad day or hard news. Sometimes it's a hundred little frustrations over the course of a day or week that push us into disillusionment, despair, or even anger. In these moments, I challenge you (and myself) to take those moments to start small:

- "I'm thankful to even be aware of this situation."
- "I'm thankful to have a chance to think about being thankful."
- "I'm thankful a solution might exist, even if I don't see it yet."

As we gather with family and friends during the Advent season, let's resist an easy tendency to overlook God's goodness in our lives. Begin by thanking Him for the "small things" before moving on to "bigger things." Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:6: *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."* So, when the holiday glow fades and everyday challenges return, hold fast to your gratitude. Give thanks and remember — you are blessed. Rejoice knowing that God is at the helm, fully in control, and His goodness surrounds you.

## **Elizabeth MacQueen's Mission Trip to Peru**

*As promised during the Worship Service on November 9, we're excited to share additional information about a wonderful mission trip opportunity for Elizabeth MacQueen. Please take a moment to read her message below and pray for her upcoming trip to Peru:*

This January, I have the opportunity to travel to Peru for 10 days on a mission trip with other high school seniors at The Wilberforce School. We will partner with a local church in Iquitos, Peru and travel upriver to minister among jungle villages. The church has been laboring in the region for 40+ years, planting new churches, training and teaching leaders, and providing material support (e.g., clean-water wells).

While the people of coastal Peru are familiar with Christianity, the message of the Gospel has only been known in the remote jungle regions for the last 100 years or so. The mission trip I will be going on involves house to house evangelism and prayer, leading Vacation Bible School, sports ministry with the local children, and participating in church services.

As you can imagine, a trip like this requires support. First, I ask that you pray. Second, I ask that you consider giving financially. In order to go on this mission trip, I need to raise \$2750 by December 17, 2025. This trip is a great opportunity for me to follow Christ's call to serve the church and his command in Matthew 28 to "go and make disciples of all nations." If you would like to be part of this mission trip through your financial support, please visit this link:

<https://app.managedmissions.com/MyTrip/lizmqueen1>



## **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
Bridget Bernheisel	December 10
Ed MacQueen	December 18
Charles Muldrow	December 27
Ansu John	December 29
Gadiel Quiroga	December 30

## **Church Workday On December 6**



Please join us on Saturday, December 6, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, for a bit of healthy exercise, fresh air and fellowship, as we spruce up our church grounds for the holidays! We'll be picking up branches, raking leaves, and bringing them to the curb to keep our property looking its best.

Please bring rakes, tarps, gloves, and other tools if you have them. Hot coffee and donuts will be provided to keep everyone energized. The Boy Scouts will also be lending a hand. Many thanks in advance for your kind help and cheerful participation!





## We're Updating Our Database

If you're not receiving our newsletter, emails and chapel mailings, please print your information clearly on the front of the Chapel Card enclosed in your Sunday bulletin. Check "Regular Attendee" and you will be added to our database. Please also include the birth dates of your family members. We don't want you to miss any of the upcoming Christmas events and exciting chapel news!

If you are already in our database but have recently changed your phone number or email address, simply write your name and only your updated contact information on the Chapel Card. Thank you for helping us keep our records current and our chapel family connected!

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*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on  
his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty  
God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of  
Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6*

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## Princeton Youth Leadership Program

A Princeton Youth Leadership Program will be offered for students in grades 1–12, on Saturdays from January 10 through March 21, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at Antheil Elementary School in Ewing. The fee is \$50. Space is limited. Register soon.

For additional information, please email [youthtoastmasters@gmail.com](mailto:youthtoastmasters@gmail.com). Or you can contact Tingting Sun by email at [tingtingsun.toastmasters@gmail.com](mailto:tingtingsun.toastmasters@gmail.com).

## October Harvest Party



## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### Prepare the Way of the Lord!

December is a month of anticipation: Christmas is coming! Our celebration of the earthly arrival of God Incarnate is rapidly approaching, and with it a significant "TO DO" list. We send cards, shop for and purchase gifts, decorate our homes, bake goodies, and plan for guests and parties. These may all serve a good purpose, but it strikes me that the most important preparation is that of our own hearts.... It is what the liturgical season of Advent—Coming—is all about.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, called to proclaim the kingdom of God. In the Gospel of Matthew, we read these words of John:

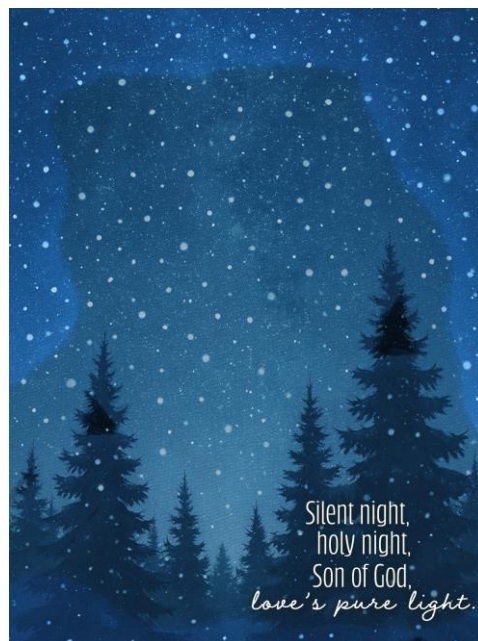
*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.  
Make ready the way of the LORD,  
Make His paths straight!*

The trappings of Christmas are not necessarily inappropriate, but we do not want them to become a trap! They are secondary to John's message. If we are to recognize and welcome Christ into the depths of our beings, and if we are to embrace His work in us and through us, it is important to turn our minds and hearts to the Kingdom of God. We can prayerfully identify and repent of sin, and we can look to remove the life clutter that could make it difficult for the Lord to reach us. In doing so, we become more able to receive our Lord and respond to His indwelling work in us via the Holy Spirit.

John also proclaimed the importance of bearing fruit in keeping with repentance (Luke

3:8). Genuine repentance means that again by the power of the Holy Spirit, we change direction from self-focus to God-focus and become more closely aligned with Christ. When we do this in the here and now, we are better able to manifest Christ. Our lives echo John's words to the world, that the kingdom of God has come!

And now if we circle back to our Christmas "TO DO" lists, it is easy to see that the trappings of our celebration will have deeper meaning and impact if we see those trappings not merely as something we traditionally do, but as expressions of the kingdom of God within us and pouring forth. Joy to the World! Prepare the Way of the Lord!



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

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