

November 2008

Cyberspace News

Michigan News



Christmas: A Season of Salvation

Elder Charles Moore

Christmas has different meanings for each one of us, but family gatherings, good food, friends, travel, shopping, football, exchanging of gifts and religious celebration still seem to be part of almost everyone's Christmas celebration.

The true meaning of Christmas, of course, is that it is a season of salvation. Here is how the apostle Paul puts it in the book of Galatians: **"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"** (Gal.4:4-5). In order to have a season of salvation, the redeemer must come, so God sent forth his Son.

"Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for

her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:1-7)

During the final weeks of Mary's pregnancy, the Jews of Nazareth received word from the local Roman garrison that Caesar Augustus had sent out a decree that a census should be taken of his empire. The Romans held a census every 14 years for the purposes of discovering how much tax money they could expect to raise. Mary and Joseph both originated from the house and family of David so they had to travel some 90 miles south of Nazareth to Bethlehem, the land of Ruth and Boaz, and the ancient home of their great-great-grandfather King David. We may have an image, born of Christmas greeting cards, of a very pregnant Mary riding as Joseph leads a donkey on this difficult journey. Let us hope they had such a donkey.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, the Lord God was arranging this wonderful moment (Gen.3:15). God had predicted the series of events that would happen over the centuries to make this moment possible: the birth of the Messiah, a Son

who would come out of the loins of Adam; from the loins of Shem, one of Noah's three sons; out of Abraham through Isaac (not Ishmael); out of Jacob (not Esau); out of Jesse's son David (not one of David's seven older brothers); out of Solomon (not the oldest or even an older one of all of David's sons). Eventually, this son would be born of a virgin in the city of Bethlehem. **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)** As the prophet Micah had written some 700 years earlier to the capital city of Samaria and Jerusalem when they faced the forthcoming Assyrian captivity: **"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."** Therefore He will give them *up* until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. **And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. (Micah 5: 2-4)**

God used the Roman government to help fulfill the last of many prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, God in the flesh. Joseph and Mary did not have

(Continued on page 2)

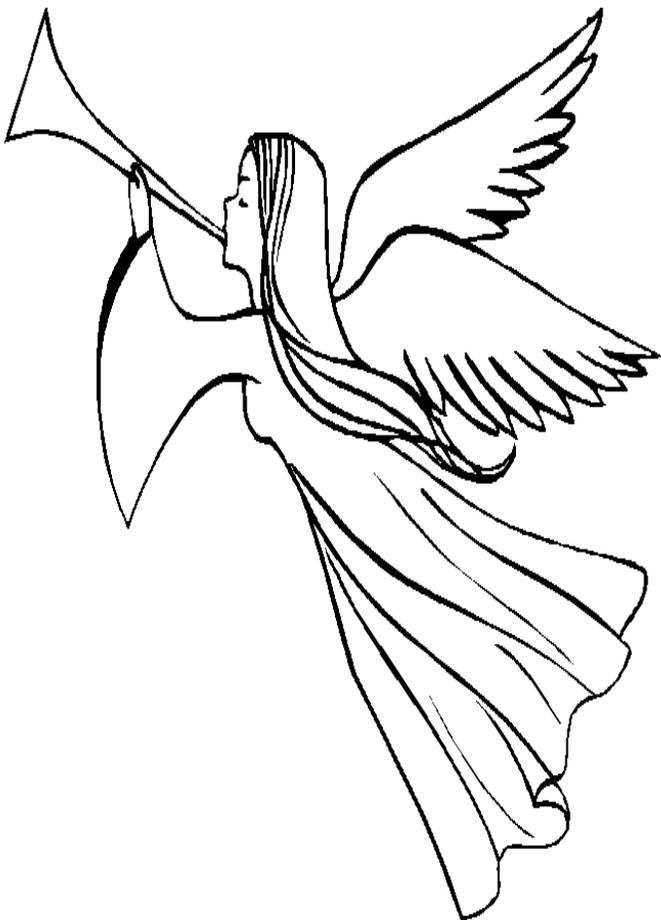
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any relatives with whom they could stay in Bethlehem. Furthermore, to make matters worse, all of the rooms that normally were available to travelers had already been taken up by the many Roman officials and Jews who had arrived before them. But Mary was about to give birth. Joseph found a large cave cut out of a rock ledge which was used by a local inn for housing the animals of its clients. He secured a warm place with some new straw. The apostle John would write years later, **“and she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn” (Luke 1:7).** John tells us, **“and the Word because flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).** There in that cave, a shelter for animals, was born the Son of God, the Savior of the World, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Immanuel.

Christmas is a season of salvation. We should rejoice that Jesus was born in the ancient city of Bethlehem long ago, and our hearts should be filled with joy because that Child was and is the Savior Christ the Lord. Some thirty years later, five miles away in the city of Jerusalem, this same Son would be taken down from the cross and placed into another cave, this time a borrowed tomb but the tomb could not hold Him. He rose from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father where **“... He always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)** Merry Christmas and Amen!



Cyberspace News genevabegeman@charter.net

November was a colder than usual November, but we hearty Michiganders made it through and gathered at various tables to thank God for our blessings on Thanksgiving Day. Our church group is truly blessed with everyone except one working. The midwest is hard hit financially, but we are counting our blessings and find we are way ahead with those!

On the 15th of November a large group gathered at the Olive Garden in Livonia to celebrate our dear Ila Baker's 93 birthday. She looked super (see pictures) and was very happy--especially when it was time for the carrot cake. Most of the group continued over to Ila's assisted living home and daughter Sandy Fine gave us a tour of the large facility. Ila seems very content and has made some good friends there.

David and Ruth Charles traveled to Phoenix, AZ during this month to vacation and visit various friends. One of the pictures I received was from Berty Lane with the whole gang at a pizza party at Jon and Berty's. Kane and Jennie Begeman were also present as well as Shea and Scott Lane. They spent a lovely evening with Ellen Momberger and her son Carl Jr. and daughter-in-law Sherry. They both had enjoyed living in Florida for years at the same time and had many pleasant memories to talk over. They were also able to visit Sally Smeltzer and Erving Stable and his wife. The Stables were friends many years ago and many of you folks knew them. Erving is 88 years old now and is still going strong. David and Ruth are back in Florida once again and David is waiting for a date to be set for his heart surgery. Please remember him in prayer.

The Rob Vaughn's hosted the brother and sisters of Lynn along with all the nephews, neices and their children at a large gathering on Thanksgiving Day. All that was missing was Grandpa and Grandma Charles who were back in Florida by then. Kathy and Joe Smeltzer reported a lively gathering of well over 20 there.

I talked to Dorothy Layton recently and she said she and Hannah Phillips were going to enjoy the holiday at a gathering at Deborah and Jim Stoner's. Hannah was staying nearby at her daughter Michelle Perry's and Dorothy was looking forward to a week of visiting and eating out with her I am sure!

Leslie (Arquette) Miller recently sent pictures of the celebration of Rebecca's first birthday. I think she liked her cake almost as much as Ila Baker liked hers!



Michigan Report

Aurine Moore

November – a month that began with several spring-like sunny days, ended with us locating winter gloves and mittens, and enjoying Thanksgiving celebrations in schools, church, and with family. We enjoyed a Thanksgiving Service with our good friends from the Petersburg Church of God – Seventh Day. Comments heard included: a good service, great meal, wonderful worship and much to be thankful for.

I began my month in recovery from surgery and iodine treatment for thyroid cancer. I missed the wonderful Thanksgiving dinner at the Petersburg church, but by the end of the month found myself feeling well and officially healthy. Members of the Echoes of Happiness had colds this month but could not be counted out – they were able to sing at both Tender Care and the Fountain View nursing homes and had a wonderful time.

On the wonderful news front, Joel and Carrie (Smeltzer) DeHaan are expecting a baby. Carrie told her mother that if a medical student is going to have a baby while in school, this is the perfect time! Congratulations! On another celebratory note, please note that there are towns in Oklahoma (and maybe even Michigan) smaller than the crowd who went to watch Ashley Begeman play at the State semi-final volleyball championship games. At one of the games which her team won, there were 35 people, including parents, grandparents (including Dale and Geneva Begeman), cousins, and family friends.

Oh what a joy it is to gather in a church lobby on a 'full church day' and people are talking energetically and happily. We had such days this month. On one of those, we left the lobby and went on to gather at Tender Care for our bi-monthly singing service with the Church of God Seventh Day. Judy Begeman came out to be a part of the service and it was sweet to watch as one person after another, some from our church, some from Petersburg and some visitors, stopped to visit with her and just enjoy her presence. We have been enjoying the company of a fellow-worshipper, Richard Brown, who recently asked for and received the right hand of fellowship. Shortly after, he moved from Carleton to Flat Rock and will still to be able

to worship with us. Marshala Goins and her family have successfully made the move to her new home in Newport, Michigan. She really enjoys her new home and has worked very hard to get everything done. She's also happy that her son James' surgery to correct muscle spasms is successfully finished and he is showing improvements.

Here is a tidbit from Elder Tim Begeman on eschatology, delivered as part of the Sabbath school warm-up.: Despite differences among Christian denominations, there are certain doctrines we hold in common: all people will rise from the dead, there will be a judgment, an eternal state will commence, the saved will live eternally with Jesus and there will be a re-creation of the cosmos. Pastor Charlie Moore prepared for one sermon by photographing five lonely kernels of corn to illustrate five abundant kernels of Thankfulness we receive from Psalm 103: God forgives us, heals us, redeems us, crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercies; satisfies our years with good things, renewing our youth like the eagle's.

We enjoyed hearing Katie Begeman, with back-up support from Jeff and Melinda, sing "I love you Lord" for variety time. She's a good singer with poise and we look forward to more selections from her. The older members of the congregation laughed with sympathy when Don Daniels shared a tale of "age-induced attention deficit disorder".

We were very sorry that our friend Karyn Zajackowski died this month. Our prayers are with her husband, Ted, and her son and daughter-in-law, Joe and Kathy. She was ill for a long time but she had great resilience, style, and was unforgettable to those who knew her.

We've been missing but remembering our friend, Marcia Moore, who continues to recover from foot surgery. She keeps us posted with prayer chain requests for the people she knows at her high-rise and frequent conversations with her good church friends, Melinda Begeman and Terrie Fedor. Until next month, may God be with you and may you seek Him.

Praise God for Christmas.

Praise God for Christmas.

Praise Him for the incarnation for Word made Flesh.

I will not sing of shepherds watching flocks on frosty night or angel choristers.

I will not sing of stable bare in Bethlehem,
or lowing oxen, wise men, trailing distant star,
with gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Tonight I will sing praise to the Father who stood on heaven's threshold

And said farewell to His Son,
as He stepped across the stars to Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

And I will sing praise to the infinite eternal Son
Who became most finite a Baby,

Who would one day be executed for my crimes.
Praise Him in the heavens,

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If There Had Been No Christmas Morn

If there had been no Christmas morn,
No Christ Child in a manger born,
No shepherds watching in the night,
No angel song, no star of light
Then there would be no hope today
For this old world where sin holds sway.

No peace for souls weighed down with sin,
No deep abiding joy within,
No burdens lifted by His grace,
No strength to run life's weary race,
No sorrows eased, no tempests quelled,
No fears dispersed, no doubts dispelled.

No song of praise, no answered prayer,
No loving Lord to guide and care:
But friend, there was a Christmas morn
When Christ, the Son of God, was born.
Oh, Hallelujah, praise His name,
Hope lives today because He came!