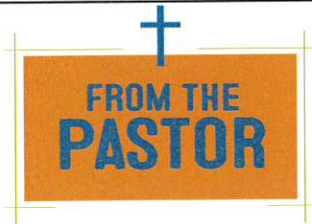




THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

December 2024

Volume 66 Number 11



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THE NATIVITY

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

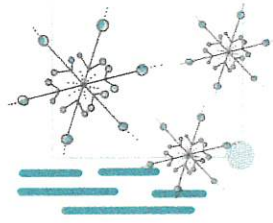
A nativity is defined as “the occasion of a person’s birth.” The Nativity is the birth of Jesus Christ. A nativity scene is sometimes referred to as a nativity; which is a picture, carving, or model representing Jesus’ birth. I write this article today on the nativity of a new great nephew of mine named Cade David Macri. The nativity of my new granddaughter, Juniper Joy Taylor, was October 28. Everyone born has had a nativity and when we celebrate birthdays we celebrate a nativity, but when we celebrate The Nativity, we celebrate Christmas. When we celebrate birthdays the actual birth date might be important to us. When we celebrate The Nativity the true date of Jesus’ birth matters little compared to the Savior of the world being born. (Jesus may have been born in the Spring.) The birth of Jesus was like no other!

The holy night wasn’t just uniquely special because of messianic prophecies, or the angelic announcement to shepherds and the angelic choir, or the visitors from the East to a lowly stable. What makes The Nativity most unique is the divinely human baby in the manger. That’s the most important part of The Nativity.

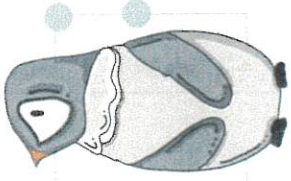
Leanne told me that after I borrowed her nice nativity scene last year for a children’s story at church that I also lost the baby Jesus. It had belonged to her mother. It’s not the same keepsake without the baby Jesus. Without Jesus a nativity isn’t the same. It’s that way in real life. Christmas is the birth of Jesus. If we don’t worship the Christ child, then Christmas isn’t the same. Let’s not lose track of the importance of the baby and how the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

In Christ’s Love,
Pastor Mo Dunn





HELLO december



2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:30am Christian Ed. Advent Begins	2 7:30pm Deacon & Deaconess meeting	3 6:00pm Bells 7:00pm Choir	4 7:00pm Bible Study	5 7:00pm Bible Study	6	7
8 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 2-4pm Museum 6-8pm Open House at Parsonage	9 7:00pm Trustee meeting	10 6:00pm Bells 7:00pm Choir	11 7:00pm Bible Study	12 7:00pm Bible Study	13	14 8am-2pm Fellowship hall reserved
15 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship	16	17 6:00pm Bells 7:00pm Choir	18 7:00pm Bible Study	19 7:00pm Bible Study	20	21 9-12 Recycling 10am Adult Choir 11Program Rehearsal Winter Begins
22 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship	23 9:00pm Candlelight Service	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29 10:15am Worship	30 New Year's Eve	31				



Look upon love

Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us. —Martin Luther



Everyone is invited to an open-house visit at the parsonage on Sunday evening December 8 from 6:00 to 8:00pm. Refreshments and good company will be available.



Dec. 1	Aaron & Lori Crider	Jameson Thomas
Dec. 8	Marty & Deb Thomas	Beth Ogle
Dec. 15	Kim & Bob Roethlisberger	Madi Larimore
Dec. 22	Adam Long and Dan Brown	Norah Baker
Dec. 24	Travis & Anna Watkins	Zoey Diller
Dec. 29	Ryan & Kim Rager	Carson Sunderland
Jan. 5	Tim & Joyce Larimore	Gena Thomas
Jan. 12	Matt & Heather Nusbaum	Rayna Ogle

Walking with those who grieve

The holiday season can be difficult for people who are grieving a death or deep loss. As Christians, we do well to be aware that not everyone feels whole-hearted joy this time of year. How can we support them?

Grief counselor Alan Wolfelt explains that walking alongside — “companionship” — one who grieves “is not about assessing, analyzing, fixing or resolving another’s grief. Instead, it is about being totally present to the mourner, even being a temporary guardian of [his or] her soul.”

Among Wolfelt’s 11 tenets for “companionship the bereaved”:

- It’s about being present to another person’s pain, not taking it away.
- It’s about listening with the heart, not analyzing with the head.
- It’s about walking alongside, not leading.

More tips are available at

www.centerforloss.com/2019/12/

May God bless you as you share the love of the Christ Child, his caring parents and his compassionate heavenly Father with people who are hurting.



Joan Thomas, Dick Williams – The Meadows of Kalida, 755 Ottawa St., Kalida, OH 45853

Linda Alger – Wingate, 1070 Gloria Ave. Room 133, Lima, OH 45805



We will be making noodles for St. David’s Day Dinner on Saturday, January 11, January 25, February 8 if needed. We will begin at 9:00am. Come join us for laughter and fellowship while making noodles. Bring your knives and rolling pins!



Gomer Welsh Community Museum
 Sunday, December 8. 2-4PM

Bring the children to see Santa and enjoy the museum at Christmas time!

Refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall at the church.

Please feel free to bring a toy for donation to Toys for Tots.



Our Christmas Eve service will be Tuesday, December 24 at 9:00pm. It will be a traditional service with carols, scripture, and candles. This Christmas season help spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. So many people need to hear some Good News. Please invite them to join us! All are welcome to come and bring your family, friends, and neighbors to celebrate the coming of the light of the world our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! May God's Blessing be upon you and yours this Christmas Season!

The electric sign in front of the church needs to be replaced. The goal for the new sign \$25,000. If you would like to contribute, mark your envelope Sign Fund. The fund continues to grow with the balance currently at \$5150.00. Thank you!



The heart of Christmas

Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands,
 The chorus of voices, the claspings of hands;
 Sing hymns that were sung by the stars of the morn,
 Sing songs of the angels when Jesus was born!
 With glad jubilations
 Bring hope to the nations!
 The dark night is ending and dawn has begun:
 Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
 All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one! ...

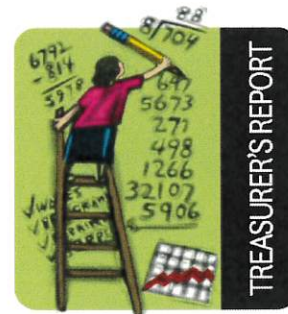
Blow, bugles of battle, the marches of peace;
 East, west, north, and south let the long quarrel cease.

Sing the song of great joy that the angels began,
 Sing of glory to God and of good-will to man!

Hark! joining in chorus
 The heavens bend o'er us!

The dark night is ending and dawn has begun;
 Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
 All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

—John Greenleaf Whittier



BUDGETED - 2024

2024 Expense Budget- \$134,767.00

2024 Monthly Expense Budget- \$11,231.00

Actual Cash Flow 10/1 - 11/15 2024

Income Inflow

Interest Income- \$0.46

Investment Payments- \$12,491.15

Sunday Offering- \$11,329.31

Tithely Offering- \$ 2,978.79

Total Income Inflow- \$26,799.71

Expenses Outflow

Bills and Utilities- \$16,087.08

Taxes- \$905.43

Total Expenses Outflow- \$16,992.51

Income Inflow - Expense Outflow \$9,807.20

That's a (re)wrap!

The Reintgen family in North Carolina will always remember Christmas 2023. At 3 a.m. on December 25, their 3-year-old son woke them up, asking for scissors to open his new action-figure toy. "That's when we realized something had gone terribly wrong," said Scott, his dad.

A quick trip downstairs revealed a mess of unwrapped gifts under the family's Christmas tree. "There was not one thing that he left unscathed," Scott said. The boy, in his defense, said he was just trying to help everyone know what they'd received.

With only hours until their other children awoke, the Reintgens were determined to save Christmas. Mom Katie raced to rewrap gifts, even managing to get most nametags back on the correct packages. Instead of being angry, the parents found humor in the ordeal. Afterward, they explained to their son the joy that people experience from receiving — and opening — their own presents.

Morals of the story? Remember this 3-year-old when you get overeager for certain parts of the holidays. Don't rush through anything, and let others enjoy Christmas at their own pace too. When something goes wrong, don't panic. Like the Reintgens, find joy in any unexpected glitches and grinchies you encounter throughout the season.

—Stephanie Martin

ANNUAL MEETING

All Annual Reports need to be in the office no later than January 15, 2025. Please, do not put it off. If you do not need bank statements, could you please turn them in earlier? You will receive a reminder in the mail soon. Thank you!

The 2024 Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 23, 2025 following the worship service.

"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love."

—Hamilton Wright Mabie



Cookie decorating kits are available for order made by Anna Watkins. The kits are \$25. and include: 16 vanilla sugar cookies, 8 chocolate sugar cookies, 3 icing bags, and some sprinkles. The cookies are a little smaller but there will be more of them. If you would like to order a kit there is a sign-up sheet in the office. Deadline for orders is December 8. All proceeds will be donated to the Gomer Church. Kits will be available for pickup Sunday, Dec. 15.



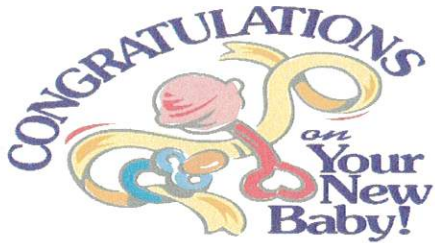
Thank you so much for your monetary donation for us to purchase winter coats for our students in need. We appreciate your repeated donations for our students. The need is great, and your donations allow us to provide a need to many more students this winter. Thank you again for your continued support.

Elida Elementary Staff



Children's Christmas Program

The children will be performing their Christmas program on Sunday, December 22nd. Practice will be held on Saturday, December 21st at 11:00 AM. No Sunday School will be held on Sunday, December 29th.



Congratulations to Christian and Kirsten Long. They had a baby boy born on September 16, 2024, Waylyn Oren Robert Long. He weighed 5lb. 13oz. and was 18 ¾ inches long. Proud grandparents are Oren and Michele Long.

Congratulations to Nick and Katie (Siefker) Battershell on the birth of their daughter on November 21, 2024. Her name is Noelle Louise Battershell and she weighed 6lb. 7oz and was 18.6 inches long. Proud grandparents are Louie and Jan Siefker.

The Incarnation

At the center of Christmas is Jesus, both fully God and fully man. "In Bethlehem, humility and glory in their extremes were joined," wrote pastor R.G. Lee (1886-1978). When Jesus came to earth, Lee explained, he descended:

- from the heights of glory to the depths of shame,
- from the wonders of heaven to the wickedness of earth,
- from exaltation to humiliation,
- from the throne to the tree,
- from dignity to debasement,
- from worship to wrath,
- from the halls of heaven to the nails of earth,
- from the coronation to the curse,
- from the glory place to the gory place!

"Born in a stable! Cradled in a cattle trough! Wrapped in swaddling clothes of poverty!" Lee wrote. "No room for him who made all rooms! [No] place for him who made and knows all places! Oh, deep humiliation of the Creator — born of the creature, woman! But in his descent was the dawn of mercy. Because we cannot ascend to him, he descends to us."

The Stewardship Committee has selected collecting items for the Heritage School's pantry for our December project. Items needed are fruit cups of all kinds, applesauce cups, fruit snacks, individual packages of peanut butter crackers, and any other items such as this. Boxes will be available in the church hallway to place your items.

The Committee has also decided to donate the Christmas Eve offering to the Elida's Lifewise Program for the purchase of Bibles.

As always, thank you for your generous donations for our projects.

The light of life

Most sand comes from coral and rocks that get ground into tiny grains. But in a few places, like some beaches of Japan, the bits of sand are shells or skeletons that once housed single-celled organisms. A magnifying glass reveals their star shape: a rounded middle and five or more spines, like a sea star.

These unique creatures live on undersea reefs and share their interior with algae called diatoms, which convert light into carbohydrates and oxygen through photosynthesis. The star points let light into the exoskeleton; in turn, diatoms produce energy to feed them both. When these organisms die, the star skeletons wash onto beaches, protecting the islands even after their own lives end. Our amazing God designed astounding creatures!

This same Creator made us able to take in light from Christ. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me ... will have the light of life" (John 8:12). When we receive his light, it becomes in us the "energy" we need to do good: to love others, care for people in need, appreciate nature — including star sand! — and give glory to the Artist of this entire incredible world.

—Heidi Hyland Mann



1 Alexis Price
Kaitlyn Price

5 Missy Griesdorn
Hannah Bass

8 Deborah Rice

13 Ann Knoderer
Logan Thomas

14 Kadin Koontz

15 Joyce Larimore

16 Don Thomas

20 Madison Nusbaum
Alexandria Nusbaum

21 Peg Walters
Monica Wreede

22 Jeff Thomas

23 Brian Knoderer

27 Bill Erickson
Robbin Schmersal

29 Tim Larimore



12 Lynn & Suzanne Metzger
14 Tammy & Dallas Jackson
18 Dina & Steve Tadana
27 Mike & Kelly Richards

Special dates

First Sunday of Advent, *December 1*
Second Sunday of Advent, *December 8*
Third Sunday of Advent, *December 15*
First day of winter, *December 21*
Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 22*
Christmas Eve, *December 24*
Christmas Day, *December 25*
New Year's Eve, *December 31*

Bible Quiz

Who was governor of Syria when Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for a mandated registration, or census?

- A. Theophilus
- B. Herod Antipas
- C. Pontius Pilate
- D. Quirinius



Bible Quiz Answer: D (See Luke 2:1-7.)

Christian symbol

ADVENT COLORS — One of the season's symbolic colors is blue, representing hope.

During Advent, we wait in

hope to celebrate again

God's coming in human

form. We also look forward

in hope to Christ's coming

in glory at the end of the

age. Purple symbolizes the

royalty of Jesus, the coming

Prince of Peace, and the

penitence with which we

receive him. Some congregations also use pink

or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink

symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the

Christ Child.



Christmas Adam

Need a fun new tradition to liven up your

Christmas celebrations? Then join the growing

number of Christians who observe Christmas

Adam — the day before Christmas Eve!

In honor of the first human, enjoy some

barbecued ribs and an apple salad or dessert.

Your family might exchange small gifts on

Christmas Adam or do last-minute shopping

together. Some people temporarily rename

their pets that day, just as Adam named the

animals in the Garden.

No matter how you celebrate, have fun on

December 23 as you remember why Jesus had

to come to earth in the first place!

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A glorious hope

Let us today go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*" Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. ...

Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to [humankind] its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory.



—C.H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*