

OUR PASTORS THOUGHTS

The very first mention in Scripture of a Messiah is a veiled reference in Genesis 3. The context is Adam and Eve being caught in violating God's instructions to not eat of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Their failure is more than just a temporary setback, one that they might hope would be overlooked. They knew they were in trouble... they are hiding from the God with whom they fellowshiped in the Garden, knowing that before Him they are naked and vulnerable, having disappointed the very God who created them and loved them into existence.

And now they are brought before the Holy One to hear their judgment and it is harsh indeed. They are banished from the Garden (Genesis 3:23). No longer will the bearing of children (what great joy is there than this?!) be easy, but hard and difficult (Gen. 3:16a); the easy familiarity of relationship between Adam and Eve will have injected a new dominance in the relationship – he will “rule” (Gen. 3:16b). Adam discovers that farming will no longer be easy (Gen. 3:17-19), rather difficult, and now death has indeed entered the world (Gen. 3:19) as grimly predicted (Gen. 3:3).

What hope in the midst of such harshness? Mercifully God gave to them such hope, in His word of judgment on the serpent: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” There would be a war between Satan and the woman (representative of all mankind) and his offspring (those who follow the Devil) and the children of God... her offspring. And then comes the wonderful promise: “**he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.**”

Who is the “he”? Most commentators understand this as a reference to Jesus Christ, the ultimate representative of Man, the second Adam. Many refer to this as the *proto euangliion*, the first gospel. While it is true that Satan will strike “his heel” (the Cross, no doubt), “he will crush your head.” Christ is the Victor! He is victorious! He will conquer Satan and Death! He will conquer the enemy of your souls! He will vanquish the Satanic hosts! He can and will conquer the attacks in your own life! We know that He has done that by his stunning act of redemption on the cross of Calvary, and by His more amazing resurrection from the grave!

This Christmas we must remind ourselves that the child who comes in a manger is with us to bring us to victory over every situation in our lives, even death itself! Even when we face problems of our own creation, God in his grace provides a way back. Christ has won the Battle over sin and death!

Rev. Richard Brondyke

I believe that during the Christmas season, there's a point in time when beauty, truth, and goodness intersect. I've learned to watch for it with anticipation, for each year such a moment steals up on me unexpectedly.

In the past, these times have happened at the family Advent lighting or at odd moments while writing yet another signature to the Christmas cards. I've noticed these moments are ones of intense peace and joy.

One Christmas Eve, years ago, we had just returned from the church candlelight service. Upstairs most of the family was getting ready for bed, but I delighted in the highlight of the exhausting Christmas preparations -a private, beautiful few moments, when I brought down the presents and arranged them under the tree, enjoyed a hot drink and gazed at our tree. Decorated in a Victorian-style sparkle of bows, pearls and glass ornaments, we'd placed it beside the fireplace and in front of a living room window. Perfect. Our other tree, bedecked with the girls' homemade ornaments, lit up our picture window in the family room.

I heard a knock at the door, but hesitated to answer it. "This is Christmas Eve," I thought. "What if that were Jesus asking to come in?" A fanciful thought, but I couldn't turn anyone away on this night of the Great Coming. When I opened the door, an older, scruffy-looking man, who was carrying a brown bag, stood on the step. "Could I come in and see your Christmas trees?" he said. After seeing both of them, I asked him about himself. A man without family, he was walking home from a Chinese restaurant nearby- A 2 mile hike on a bitterly cold evening.

Before Richard drove him home, the man insisted I take his leftover food which I did not need, or even want. But in gratitude for temporary warmth, and a Christmas welcome, it was the only gift he had to repay me. And so, I accepted it with my thanks.

Despite the disapproval, and quite sound opinion of my mother-in-law, I ate his leftovers with my Christmas dinner. A lonely man on Christmas Eve, had shown up on my doorstep, and asked me to share his dinner. I believe, the Lord was smiling His approval that Christmas. He'd been cold, lonely had eaten questionable food too, I'm sure.

The truth of Christ's marvelous coming, the goodness of an unexpected gift from an unlikely person, and the beauty of a picture-perfect Christmas Eve formed the constellation of that year's Christmas moment meant just for me.

May God give you many such moments this Christmas season. And may Jesus shine through each one.

Rev. Mary Brondyke

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Holiday Church Events

December 2, 9, 16, 23 at 9 am.

Pastor Richard will lead a study on Advent, with a Middle Eastern perspective.

December 2nd - Communion during the morning worship service.

December 9th - Caroling 5 pm.

December 24th- Christmas Eve Service 7 pm.

Our Vacation Bible School collection this summer was designated to be used for the children of Tamshiyacu, Peru. Since our Bible School was after the summer mission trip we held the money to use for Christmas. We are teaming up with 1st Presbyterian Church of Jefferson City, our partners in this mission to host a Christmas party for the children of the church and village. Stay tuned we hope to have photos of the joyful gathering in the near future.

DEACONS

November's meeting we prepared cards for 13 birthday wishes, 12 thinking of you, 3 anniversary blessings and 1 sympathy. Our next meeting is Dec. 8th when we are preparing the fruit baskets and setting up the advent candles so let's make it a meeting too! We will begin at 9:00 a.m. *Merry Christmas from the Deacons!*

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The women of Middle Octorara have not allowed any moss to grow under their feet since late summer. We are happy to be able to have sponsored and been a part of many events:

August – Clothing Give Away

Provided food for Kay Reinhart's sale

September – Soup/sub sale

October – Turkey dinner

November – Holiday Bazaar

Provided food for Ethel Caskey's sale

Phew!!

Now we can rest for a few weeks and enjoy the Celebration of Jesus' Birth.

Our next MOPW Team meeting is Sunday, January 13 immediately following the Worship Service. At that time we will spend some of our hard-earned money and make some decisions about what missions to support. Look for a report in the February newsletter about Mission giving.

February, 2019 – we plan to hold another soup/sub sale.

All women are always welcomed to join us in our endeavors.

SESSION

Sunday December 23: To celebrate the birth of Jesus we invite you to bring a canned good as a birthday gift. They will be donated to the Solanco Food Bank to help the less fortunate during the holiday season.

TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees attempted to have work day in November. The first scheduled day had snow covering the leaves we were to rake. And the “rain date” was cold and had only a handful of workers. So we did what we could, but are realizing we may have to start paying someone to do the leaves. So lawn care may go up in price.

Also Trustee Secretary Rose Griest’s term ends the end of the year, but she has volunteered to stay on as secretary, even though she won’t be a voting member of the board. So she will still be the contact person for the business side of the board. The salary will still be the same—\$ 0.

MISSIONS

The Solanco Toy Drive is Saturday, Dec. 15th. Nancy Harnish will need the donations for ages 2-12 on Sunday, Dec. 8th and also items for the mother’s packs for the food bank the same day. As always thank you.

Food Bank Any items are welcome but the following list reflects things that get low quickly.

Jell-O 3 oz.	Pudding 3 oz.	Spam	Canned beef stew
Sugar 2 lbs.	Saltine crackers	Pears	Bottled apple juice

Peru Medical Supplies Project

Again this Christmas you have the opportunity to make use of the Alternative Giving at Middle Octorara. If you want to give a gift to someone, but that person has everything, you may donate towards MEDICAL SUPPLIES PROJECT in their name (checks payable to Middle Octorara Church). This will provide much needed medical supplies to our brothers and sisters in Tamshiyacu. Just take a donor card from the table in the Welcome Center and give your donation to the church treasurer.

MISSION MUSINGS

Wow what another busy month at Middle Octorara. The first Saturday of the month was the MOPW annual Bazaar. There were lots of crafts and great food available and all the proceeds go to mission work locally and worldwide.

We held a Session Retreat on Saturday November 10. Rev. Richard and Rev. Mary led the retreat which included Session members and members of the Personnel Committee. The focus was on ways to grow our church family. They reviewed tried and true approaches as well as other creative ideas. We also started on our plan to reach out to church members who have not been attending worship services. It was an informative, enjoyable and productive day.

On Sunday November 11 during the worship service all veterans from Middle Octorara, past and present were remembered and honored. We thank each and every one of them for we are eternally grateful for their sacrifices which allow us the many freedoms we enjoy today.

November 12th through the 19th found the social hall bursting with shoeboxes filled with toys, hygiene products and other items as we collected for Operation Christmas Child. Middle Octorara donated 142 boxes and our Drop off Site collected 2,286 shoeboxes. A huge thank you to everyone who helped in any way with this worthwhile mission project.

On Sunday November 18th the women of our church family led us in worship. Rev. Mary delivered the message and several women told about what they were most thankful for. It was an inspirational and uplifting time of thankfulness and worship. Following the service we were treated to a delicious lunch of ham, scalped potatoes, green beans and other goodies. A huge thank you to those who prepared and cooked this awesome meal.

As I said it was a busy month of fellowship, worship and reaching out to serve others. This of course is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus. We must share the good news that the baby in the manger is also the same Jesus who suffered and died for our salvation. As Christmas approaches it is a great time for each of us to invite a friend, family member or coworker to come with us to church to learn more about Jesus. I challenge each one of us to prayerfully consider who God wants us to invite to come to church with us. We have no greater mission in life than to share Jesus and His life changing message with others!!!

Acts 4:12

Dan Henry

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

A Fan, not a Fanatic

Philadelphia has some of the worst fans in sports. They have a high percent of fanatics. So, what is the difference – fan/ fanatic?

Fans go to a game and cheer for their team, leave happy if the team wins and sad if they lose. Fans treat devotees of the other team with respect. Few blame losses on the officials even if it was the case. Most fans are content to accept the results of the game, and will probably say that their team was simply outplayed.

Fanatics (often drunk) boo at every opportunity, blame the officials for the failure of their team, use foul language, and want to pick a fight with fans of the other team. Fans of other teams would do well to hire a bodyguard when attending an Eagles game in Philadelphia.

The same concept can be applied to politics. Some political leaders work hard to bring compromise and get things done. Others are fanatics of the left or right. The far left (radicals) want the government to watch over you from the cradle to the grave. All of your needs will be met if you can live with sky-high taxes. The far right (reactionaries) want to go back to the “good old days” when the individual was left to sink or swim on his own. Reduce or cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; impose a tax structure that favors the rich, and generally consider any measures to help the poor and downtrodden as some kind of a socialist plot. Whatever happened to conservatives and liberals who stay in the middle of the road enough to actually have effective government?

The same concept applies to life. If we are fans of Jesus, we need to focus on what he taught and live our lives accordingly. Prejudices, ego trips, and temptations must be removed as we try to live a life that will bring others to Christ. We are not to be fanatics that judge others but fans of Jesus who love and support others.

THIS- N-THAT

NEXT TIME IT WILL BE DIFFERENT

The First Time Jesus Came
He came veiled in the form of a child.
A star marked His arrival.
Wise men brought Him gifts.
There was no room for Him.
Only a few attended His arrival.
The Next Time Jesus Comes
He will be recognized by all.
Heaven will be lit by His glory.
He will bring rewards for His own.
The world won't be able to contain His glory.
Every eye shall see Him.
He will come as Sovereign King
And Lord of all.
- John F. MacArthur Jr.

(submitted by Val Keene)

T'was the night before Christmas
God glanced over the earth.
He looked to and fro,
All over its girth.
They missed it again He said with a sigh,
A heavy heart and a tear in his eye.
I gave them my son,
So they could be free.
My greatest gift,
To them from me.
They traded me in,
For a man in red.
A little tree,
And horse drawn sled.
How do I save them,
And make them see.
My love is complete,
My grace is free.
How do I help them,
When all they know.
Is a talking snowman,
And a box with a bow.
Maybe next year,
They will stop and see.
The biggest gift of Christmas
Is the little child from me.

(submitted by Rose Griest)

CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

1. How many times does Santa check his list?
2. The Grinch is as cuddly as a _____?
3. One foggy Christmas Eve, Santa came to say what?
4. Good tidings to you, and all of your what?
5. Who was seated next to me a day or two ago in the song Jingle Bells?
6. Why do I want my two front teeth for Christmas?
7. What did Frosty The Snowman do when they placed the magic hat on his head?
8. On the eleventh day of Christmas, what did my true love send to me?
9. What do Janice and Jen want for Christmas in the song It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas?
10. It would of been a laugh to see Mommy doing what last night?
11. I'm dreaming of a White Christmas with what?

(Answers on the bottom of Page 12)



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

December birthday's

2 – John Caskey, Jr.
10 – Linda Caskey
13 – Ben Keene, Clint Frackman
14 – Vivian Caldwell
15 – Cathy Miller
18 – Curtis Frackman
21 – Emma Garver
23 – Helen Rasmussen
25 – Dan Keene
28 – Susan Kauffman, Dick Keene
29 – Jill Garver, Kay Bueche, Cory Barrett
30 – Brenda Roark

December anniversaries

24 – Lloyd & Cathy Miller
30 – Christy (Frackman) & Travis Heidinger

January birthday's through the 5th

2 – Virgil Roark
4 – Sandy Rineer
5 – Annie Frackman



Jim Bueche's 85th birthday Nov. 4th

TREASURER'S REPORT

**GENERAL FUND
& BENEVOLENCE FINANCES**

November 2018

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

Nov. 4 -	General Fund	1,798.00	Benevolence	126.00
Nov. 11-	General Fund	1,462.00	Benevolence	180.00
Nov. 18 -	General Fund	1,549.00	Benevolence	144.00
Nov. 25 -	General Fund	1,674.00	Benevolence	141.00

An additional \$2,358.53 General Fund money, including manse rental and \$57.00 Benevolence money was also received by mail etc.

November ended with a very comfortable balance. Our 2019 budget was approved at the Congregational Meeting on Nov. 25th. There is one more month in 2018 and then we will see what the Lord has planned for our church in the New Year.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	11,050.28	129,840.78	8,841.53	114,660.95	111,107.34
Benevolence	492.32	5,784.76	648.00	6,645.00	

Debbie Hoover, Secretary-Treasurer



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec. 2 Communion	Dec. 3	Dec. 4 ROMEO club 9:00 a.m.	Dec. 5	Dec. 6	Dec. 7	Dec. 8 Deacon's mtg. make fruit baskets
Dec. 9 Covenanter Advent Svc. Caroling 5:30 p.m.	Dec. 10	Dec. 11 ROMEO club 9:00 a.m. Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 12	Dec. 13 Session Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 14	Dec. 15
Dec. 16	Dec. 17	Dec. 18 ROMEO club 9:00 a.m.	Dec. 19	Dec. 20	Dec. 21	Dec. 22
Dec. 23	Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Svc. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 25 	Dec. 26	Dec. 27	Dec. 28	Dec 29
Dec. 30	Dec. 31	Jan. 1 	Jan. 2	Jan. 3	Jan. 4	Jan. 5

Answers:

1. Twice
2. Cactus
3. Rudolf With Your Nose So Bright, Won't You Guide My Sleigh Tonight?
4. Kin
5. Miss Fanny Bright
6. So I Could Wish You Merry Christmas
7. He Began To Dance Around
8. Eleven Pipers Piping
9. Dolls that will talk and will go for a walk
10. Kissing Santa Claus