

The Gospel News

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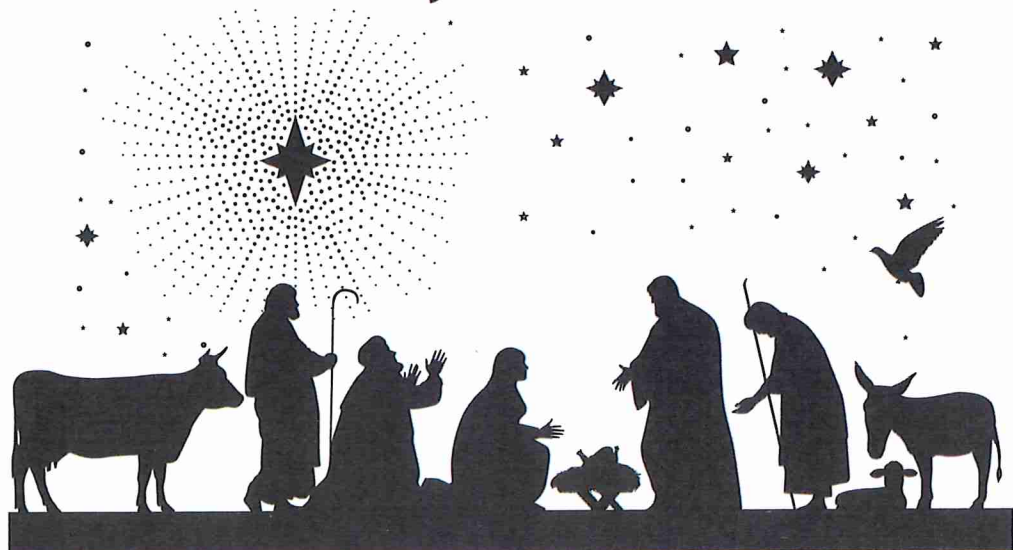
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The Nativity



It is the season again to commemorate our Lord's holy birth. It is the season to renew our joyful devotions to our Heavenly Father for His greatest of gifts to the human family, even our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the season when we are reminded of the greatness of God's love:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life" (John 3:16).

A SAVIOUR, CHRIST THE LORD

It is the season when we are stirred to review Saint Luke's eloquent account of the nativity of our Lord: *"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:6-14).*

(Continued on page 6)

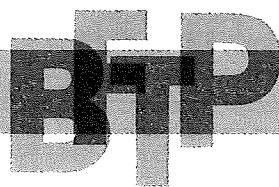
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Try to find joy in every moment this month	2	3 Stay focused on the TRUE meaning of Christmas	4	5 Decorate your heart, not just your home	6	7 Volunteer to help with the Christmas celebration at Church
8 Tell your brothers and sisters that you love them	9 Invite friends and family to your Christmas program	10	11 Pray for the Levittown Branch -pg 4	12	13 Plan to go Christmas caroling	14
15 Read the story of Jesus's birth with your family	16	17 Pray for those missing loved ones this month	18	19 Invite a needy family to your home to celebrate	20	21 Call a brother or sister who may be down this time of year
22	23 Pray for the Church in Mozambique- pg 4	24 Sing Christmas carols with your family	25 Have a BLESSED Christmas	26	27 Spend free time working for the Lord	28
29	30	31 Thank God for all of the blessing during the last year	1	2	3	4

November 2013
S M T W T F S
1 2
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10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

January 2014
S M T W T F S
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12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31

December 2013

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah: 9:6).



Blast From The Past

December 7, 1941

For the saints at Detroit Branch #2 their Sunday evening would start like any other MBA service, although the actual plan that evening was to rehearse for their upcoming Christmas program. Suddenly, like the rest of the world—62 years ago this month on December 7th—their day's activities came to a deadening halt when news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor reached the branch. For Brother Emil and Sister Anna Carlini, this historic event would take on a personal burden: Their 19-year-old son, Joe, was a Marine stationed at Pearl Harbor. Having his life spared that day and throughout the war, Brother Joe would reflect, *"Years later I was explained to me about the prayer vigil of the mothers of the servicemen overseas and the experiences had that God would watch and protect the sons of the saints."*

You can read more testimonies of the children of the saints who served in World War II in Volume II of the Church History.

Joseph Carlini ►





Purpose • Mission • Vision

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus Christ

Wordup

The Case For Christ: Holding The "Word Up" By Elder Doug Obradovich

Is reading scripture difficult for you?

Do the "thees" and "thous" make Christ's words seem irrelevant, even losing their potency in translation?

Let's take a deeper dive into Jesus' message and see if we can make sense of it all.

If successful, let's agree to hold the "Word Up"!

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

Martha and Mary were just like you and your sibling(s), involved in a robust relationship. When Jesus visited Martha's home, their sibling rivalry was evident. Prior to this verse, we read that Mary "sat at Jesus' feet" (v. 39). As Mary enjoyed the unencumbered luxury of listening to Christ's message, Martha served. The Word explains Christ was not traveling alone ("as **they** went"), so Martha may have been serving (cooking, feeding, etc.) an entire entourage. While she did, her sister "sat at Jesus' feet."

Being so upset by this, Martha went to Christ and told Him, "Lord, does thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" ("Don't you care she's taking advantage of me?"). She provoked Him to rescue her, "Bid her therefore that she help me" ("Tell her to pitch in!"). But He didn't rescue Martha in her busyness, but **from** her busyness. He called her by name twice (maybe to get her attention), "Martha, Martha." He then pointed out that her anxiousness ("thou art careful and troubled about many things") caused her to miss the only important thing ("but one thing is needful") and encouraged her to take advantage of the opportunity, as Mary had done.

Life is defined by choices, with rewards given to all these decisions. Martha seemed to have been a loving, conscientious hostess, but she discounted the value of personal interaction and connection. Christ was not going to refuse that experience for her sister ("Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"). Ecclesiastes states, "For everything there is a season." Martha's dedication had its place, but it wasn't the time for it; it wasn't what was "needful." Time is unforgiving and once opportunity passes, it can't be regained. Jesus was imploring us to value time, assessing each situation rightfully.

Recently I confessed to my children that so often when we're all together, I find myself working instead of interacting and connecting. I discovered my inner-Martha! So I committed to put away my work and spend more time with my family, because I would much rather uncover my inner-Mary. It was time to choose "that good part" in my dealings with my family. Maybe you can consider less Reality TV, X-Box or Facebook and find that "good part" in your lives, too. Why? Because Christ said it's "needful"!

Do you have a favorite verse you'd like us to dissect? Please send it in to: "Word Up"

Domestic Church — Levittown, PA Branch



The Levittown Branch began in the late 1950s when meetings were held in the home of Brother Samuel Dell in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania. The Church building in nearby Levittown was erected in 1974 and the branch has met there ever since.

In 2004, the Levittown Branch divided in half with the establishment of the Mt. Laurel, New Jersey Branch. The congregation remaining in Levittown banded together and the Lord blessed us with 40 baptisms over the next nine years, restoring the congregation to the size it was before the division! Approximately 25 of these baptisms were people from the surrounding community. As a result, our congregation is quite diverse, with people from all walks of life.

Our activities are mostly outreach-oriented such as community picnics, clothing drives, Christmas Caroling, visiting assisted living facilities, etc. The Levittown congregation has become known for its welcoming spirit. Our members are very comfortable inviting people to Church and as a result, we have someone new attending our services just about every month. It is exciting to attend Church with such frequent opportunities to share Christ's love, the gift of Salvation, and the Restored Gospel with the members of our community.

International Church — Mozambique



Can you imagine giving your testimony to your relatives and it resulting in the growth of the Church by adding over 50 branches and 4,800 members?! That's exactly how the work began in Mozambique! After a brother met the Church in Malawi he went back to his home country and began to share the Gospel with all who would listen. In 2007 Brothers Lyle Criscuolo and Chris Gehly baptized the first members in Mozambique and the Church was officially registered in that country in 2011.

Currently there are 23 elders serving congregations of all ages who meet in thatched huts and temporary shelters. Two main languages, Chichewa and Portuguese, are spoken by members who are spread out throughout the country, which is twice the size of California. Since the terrain is very mountainous the elders travel by motorcycle and must stay in tents due to the lack of accommodations in the remote areas.

Buildings and the Book of Mormon, in their languages, are needed to continue to spread the Word of God in this country. So remember to pray for the saints there and yes, YOUR testimony can make a difference!!!

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By Elder Anthony Sclaro

The Gospel passages beginning on Page 1 of this issue remind us that after Christ was born, shepherds from nearby fields and wise men from the East came and worshipped Him. The manger scene so familiar to us is actually a pastiche of the accounts in Matthew and Luke, bringing all of the characters together to create an evocative, memorable image that for many has become an indispensable part of the Christmas season.

Whether these visitations occurred on the same night or not, looking at them as a single event gives us a glimpse of the world Jesus came to save. The entire spectrum of humanity is assembled there as Christ was—and is—revered and worshipped by people from all nations and walks of life. Before the innocent babe could speak, Jesus taught us His first lesson by placing all of mankind on an equal footing, without deposing any kings or freeing any slaves.

As earthly beings, however, we tend to focus more on the differences between people than the similarities. We begin at an early age to identify with individuals like ourselves, and, often to our detriment, start thinking in terms of “us versus them.” Even after Christ had established His Church, it took an open vision for Peter to perceive that “*God is no respecter of persons*” (Acts 10:34). The Jews were notoriously protective of their heritage; the apostles of old had their roots in that culture and definitely experienced some growing pains as they learned to broaden their outreach.

It is important for us to remind ourselves that Jesus, at His birth and throughout His life, taught us to make room in our minds and hearts—and in our Church—for all who sincerely seek the Lord and follow His teachings. The illustration of the shepherds and wise men shows us how we must include:

- Rich and poor—Jesus provides for the poor and softens the hearts of the rich to consider their plight, as God had taught from the beginning (Deuteronomy 15:7).
- Gentile and Jew—Not limiting Himself to a particular lineage or ethnic group, Jesus extends His covenant to everyone in the household, as the Lord did with Abraham (Genesis 17:12).
- Sophisticated and simple—God dwells not in the mind but in the heart (Deuteronomy 6:5). To know Jesus never required academic achievement or intellectual aptitude.
- Near and far—While some grow up having Him close at hand, others endure a lengthy, perilous journey before finding Jesus (Zechariah 8:21-22).
- Diligent seekers and sudden encounters—Some may devote much time and energy studying, praying, and seeking the Savior. Others testify that they heard the glad tidings unexpectedly, while not looking for anything in particular (Isaiah 55:5-6).

When Jesus came to Earth He did not distinguish between shepherds and wise men; He saw only souls in need of salvation. In each case, whether they saw a star, heard the angels sing, or beheld God’s glory in the skies, they were drawn to Christ by divine revelation, and each went away with a powerful testimony of what he had seen.

Let us seek, at this Christmas season and always, to be messengers of light and love, spread the joyous news to everyone around us, and make certain we’re not standing in the way of the Lord revealing Himself to whomever He pleases.

Faith Love/Charity Hope Unity Righteousness Congruence
Responsibility Empathy Loyalty Leadership Honor Rights/Respect Duty

VALUES

By Brother Chris Gehly

Value: Righteousness

Definition: Meeting the standards of Right in the eyes of Christ

Vital Verses:

- "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11: 30).
- "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost" (III Nephi 12: 6).

Scriptural Example:

One of the wonderful men who exemplify righteousness in scripture is King Benjamin. Here was a man who had the duty to govern a people who were rarely righteous. They constantly departed from the ways of God and could not hold to His standards. Yet in the Words of Mormon it says he was "a holy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness" (v.17). He was able to serve the people with his own hands and exemplify Christ to his subjects. Through his righteous example, he was able to lead many of his people to Jesus Christ.

Life Application:

As a new home owner, one of the things I looked forward to was being able to start a garden. I always enjoyed the results of a summer's labor: fresh herbs and veggies. Yet my ambitions are often more lofty than what I actually am willing to accomplish. After a few days, I found that I forgot/didn't want to weed and water. In order to gain the reward, I still had to put the effort into my garden.

The same thought applies to our salvation. Each person who accepts the walk of Jesus Christ desires to reap the fruit of eternal life. This is achieved by living our lives to the standard that He established for us as Solomon instructed us in Proverbs. Jesus said that we are to hunger after that righteousness in our lives. If we do, we will be satisfied. Righteousness is removing the weeds of sin and transgression from our lives by asking for forgiveness. It is watering our souls with the Word and acting upon it (James 1). God provides His sunlight of grace and mercy, without which nothing would be possible, and the fruit of our life grows. When we continually put forth righteousness in our lives, we will reap the fruit. Just as King Benjamin labored, so too must we labor mightily in righteousness.

Points to Ponder:

- Despite being a lofty goal, is it possible for us to continually strive to be like Jesus Christ?
- Righteousness is a lifestyle that must be adopted each and every day. How are you doing in this area?
- Are you trying to be righteous without asking for help from Jesus?

Presented originally on the Gospel Blog

The Nativity Continued from page 1

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH

It is the season when we are also reminded of Saint Matthew's moving account of our Lord's birth and the notable visit of the wise men. On arriving in Jerusalem, they inquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

On being sent to Bethlehem, "...they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:1-11).

It is the season for us to praise God as did the shepherds, the wise men, and the heavenly hosts; to praise Him, for "A Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

It is the season to sing Isaac Watts' stirring hymn to the resounding music of George F. Handel:

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing!

—from the December 1983 Gospel News

Blessings in Harrison, Michigan *By Sister Karen Pandone*

Have you ever been “Up North” in Michigan? You know, that state where the people show you where their city is by pointing it out on their hand?! If you don’t know where Harrison, Michigan is, hold up your left hand and point to the knuckle on your middle finger—that’s where it is!

For years the mission met in the township hall every Sunday and then on Thursday evenings for Bible Study. Recently the Church purchased its own building located right on the busy main street of Harrison, Michigan—you can’t help but notice the lighted sign displaying the current time as you drive into Harrison. There’s plenty of seating in the pews, they have an organ and piano, classrooms, and a small kitchen area for feeding the saints. Currently there is one resident elder, Brother Lyle Criscuolo. Not only does he service the saints in Harrison, which number about 12 now, but in recent years he’s also been very active in the Malawi and Mozambique works. Due to recent health issues Brother Lyle is staying close to home, and it’s a good thing—the Lord is bringing souls in off the street looking for the Savior.

On July 21, 2013 Brother John Franklin was baptized. Due to Brother Lyle’s health, Brother Michael Pandone made the trip and baptized Brother John. Brother Lyle confirmed him. Brother John was introduced to the Gospel through his wife, Sister Donnetta. An interesting fact about the Franklin’s—they raise sled dogs! If you visit them be prepared to share the area with their 30+ dogs.

On Sunday, August 4, 2013 Jason Rumsey was looking for peace in his life and walked into the Harrison Mission. It happened to be during their feet washing service. Jason was so overcome with the realization that all he had been seeking was right here in this small group that he asked to become a member. Since then Brother Lyle and Brother Mark Loffredo began meeting with him, explaining scriptures and our faith and doctrine. Once again Brother Lyle contacted Brother Michael Pandone to come and take another soul into the waters of regeneration. Brother Jason was baptized on September 15, 2013 and Brother Lyle confirmed our new brother. In addition to being baptized, Brother Jason brought his children to be blessed. Brother Dino DiMelis, from Detroit Branch #2, blessed Brother Jason’s daughter, Ancilynn Mae, and Brother Michael Pandone blessed his son, Cian Royal. What a great day! On this day we were also blessed to have seven young people from the High School Sunday School class from Detroit Branch #2 visiting the mission along with other visitors from Branch #1. The building was filled to capacity!

So if you’re looking for a place to worship with the saints and you’re headed “Up North” in that mitten state—stop by and share a service with the saints in Harrison. Who knows, you might even be witness to another soul going into the waters or someone walking in off the street looking for peace in their lives. You’ll be welcomed with OPEN arms!

Commit to Christmas *By Sister Carolyn O’Connor*

Year after year we face the same challenges in the month of December. We struggle with the ability to focus our attention on the true meaning of Christmas and de-focus our energy on what has become this generation’s commercialized version. For some of us, all of the pressures that are added at work, school, or with family commitments have us almost dreading the entire season. These feelings are usually followed by the guilt over not look forward to the celebration of the birth of our Savior and often have us questioning our priorities.

I have a suggestion for any of you that can relate to the previous comments: Commit to Christmas. Let me explain what committing to Christmas means:

- Commit to living your life based on the examples Jesus taught us.
- Commit to finding joy.
- Commit to being an example.
- Commit to the extra things that you can do that really matter in life.

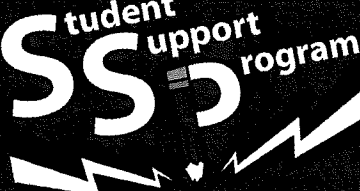
After all, why did God send His Son to earth? What messages can we use from this gift to Commit to Christmas?

Jesus came to teach us forgiveness. This Christmas, get rid of any bad feeling you have towards anyone, even if they are at fault, and forgive them. Forgive yourself for the sins of your past. Lack of forgiveness in your life holds you back from being the best you can be (See Matthew Chapter 18).


Jesus came to share love. There are so many ways to show your brothers, sisters, family and friends love. It can be the simple act of sending a note or a card, making a phone call, or pulling them aside and telling them how much you love them and how happy they are that they are a part of your life. It can be an extra long embrace where they actually feel love emanating from you, or a big smile each time that you see them. True love is unconditional, patient, kind, and unselfish. Take a moment to really share your love. “...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:37).

(Continued on Page 11)


Student Support Program



Hey, Pharaoh, now that I'm away at college, I really wish there was some way to stay in touch with young people from The Church of Jesus Christ and talk about these sweet tablets God gave me.



Dude, sign up for the SSP online study group! It's a great way to stay connected, make new friends, and study the Word of God together online!




Are you high school or college age and...

- a) Can't get to Church regularly?
- b) Want to learn more about the Word of God?
- c) Don't have Church friends in your area?

Sign up NOW for the
SSP Online Study Group!!!

Sign Up Online at:

<http://eepurl.com/GNIaH>
(or snap the QR code)



Contact: leahchurchill@gmail.com
for further details

A Christmas Miracle *By Elder Edison B. Abraham, Philippines Mission*

Christmas is and always will be a special season for me. I was born to a Christmas-believing family, and Dad would always read to us the story of the very first Christmas from the Bible (Matthew Chapter 2 and Luke Chapter 2). He used to say that Jesus was not born on December 25, and I believed him, but we celebrated Christmas anyway because of the spirit of love and joy that it brought to the world.

It was early November 1957 and the cold Siberian wind started to blow. It meant only one thing for me: Christmas was just around the corner. Soon, Mama would be placing on our humble table a once-a-year holiday treat of a slice of bread, a spread of guava jelly, and hot chocolate. We would also be hanging on our window a lighted, Do-It-Yourself Christmas lantern. And perhaps Dad would be home to put up a Christmas tree.

The thought excited me as I walked home from school that day, but along the way, my legs started losing their strength. My classmate had to support me all the way home. I was already burning with fever when I opened the gate. Mama, the ever strong-willed woman, prepared some home remedies to ease my fever, and she put me to bed. Dad got home a day later, and my condition worsened. I could not walk because I was so stiff, and I could not talk because my jaws were locked. Dad suspected tetanus and looked me over for wounds. I had none, but I had an infected tooth. That night, I was rushed to San Lazaro Hospital. I was dying.

I was placed on the tetanus ward in a hurry and was given injections and an I.V. I had my eyes closed because everything around me was a blur and I felt out of breath. Oxygen was very costly and we couldn't afford it, so Dad supplied my air with a hand-fan. All night, he fanned with one hand and held a Bible in his other. I could hear him praying softly and encouraging me to hang on. There were no tears in his eyes—just strength and faith.

The ward where they confined me was popularly known as the "death ward." Fatality was very high in those days. When you contract tetanus, death is certain. As I was being taken in on a stretcher, two orderlies were also taking out someone covered up with a white sheet. Two or three more were carried out that night. Dad and Mom were greatly worried, I knew. But what they didn't know was the resolve of their little boy to come out of that ward alive and walking.

In silence, I called to someone I only knew as God. And I made a wish: "Please let me go home for Christmas." Was I in delirium? No, I was not. The warmth and the assuring feeling that overwhelmed me at that very moment were all too real. It said to me: "You will be home for Christmas."

Three weeks after I was taken in dying, I walked out stiffly into the corridors of "death ward." The doctors and nurses beamed, clapped, and cheered for "death ward miracle boy." On the night of December 24, I sat with my family and partook of the simple noche buena (midnight meal) that Mama prepared. I was home for Christmas.

Was my second chance at life truly a miracle? Yes, it was. The hand of God reached into that grim and fearful place one lonely night all because of the faith of a father and the innocent wish of a dying boy.

The Birth of Jesus *By Brother Kerry Carlini*

The prophet of Old proclaimed His name *"Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6). The angels heralded His birth, saying *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"* (Luke 2:13-14). Yet the coming forth of our Lord and Savior was met with an unremitting resistance. Here are 5 amazing facts regarding the birth of Jesus and His preservation by the Father's hand:

- 1** Tricked by the magi from Persia who had inquired regarding the *"King of the Jews,"* Herod ordered the execution of all male children two and under, in and around Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18).
- 2** Appearing in a dream, an angel warned Joseph to *"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word"* (Matthew 2:13).
- 3** Herod's brutal act would fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah, *"A voice was heard in Ramah [a city near Bethlehem], lamentation, and bitter weeping"* (Jeremiah 31:15).
- 4** But when Herod died, an angel appeared again unto Joseph, saying, *"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life"* (Matthew 2:19-20).
- 5** Amazingly, this event would closely parallel the birth of Moses, when Pharaoh—for fear of Israel's strength—charged that every Hebrew son be "cast into the river." In Egypt, Moses was hid for three months. Finally, it was not until the death of Pharaoh, many years later, that Israel was delivered from bondage (Exodus 1:22; 2:23).



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

The Gift *By Sister Angela Yoder, General Ladies' Uplift Circle Editor*

It's exciting to receive a gift. As you carefully unwrap the paper, the anticipation of what the box holds grows, making your heart beat just a little faster. You can't contain your excitement. A smile bursts across your face. Expressions of gratitude tumble from your lips as you graciously thank the gift giver who you know spent countless hours picking out exactly the right item for you. In most cases, the excitement of the new gift wanes over time. Eventually, that item is cast aside to make way for something new. And so the cycle begins.

Parents desire to give their children gifts, especially at Christmastime. They search for that gift, the one that will make their child squeal with delight and excitement; the one gift that they will cling to all day and talk about all year. Yes, THE perfect gift. Like our parents, God wants to give each of us a gift; something to hold tight; something that will be cherished for our entire lives; a perfect gift.

He's given us the gift of life, family and friends, the Church, the beautiful hymns, the fellowship of the Saints and the Ladies' Uplift Circle. Most importantly, He gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The real message of Christmas is not the gifts that we give and receive. Instead, it is the reminder of the gift that God has given to each of us. It is a gift to which we cling. It is a gift that never stops giving.

Many gifts are packaged so beautifully, with gorgeous wrapping paper and elaborate ribbons and bows. When presented, they are just stunning. But when God's gift of His Son came to us, He wasn't presented to the world in palaces of gold or clothed in the finest of linens. Instead, it was in the humblest of wrappings; born in a stable, swaddled in rags, lying on a bed of hay. It did not diminish the value of the gift.

God gave us this gift, not because we deserved it, but rather to demonstrate His great love for us. It was His desire to bestow upon us the greatest of blessings. The gift of Jesus Christ is the gift that never grows old. It is the thing that is never cast aside to make room for something to take its place. It is the PERFECT gift.

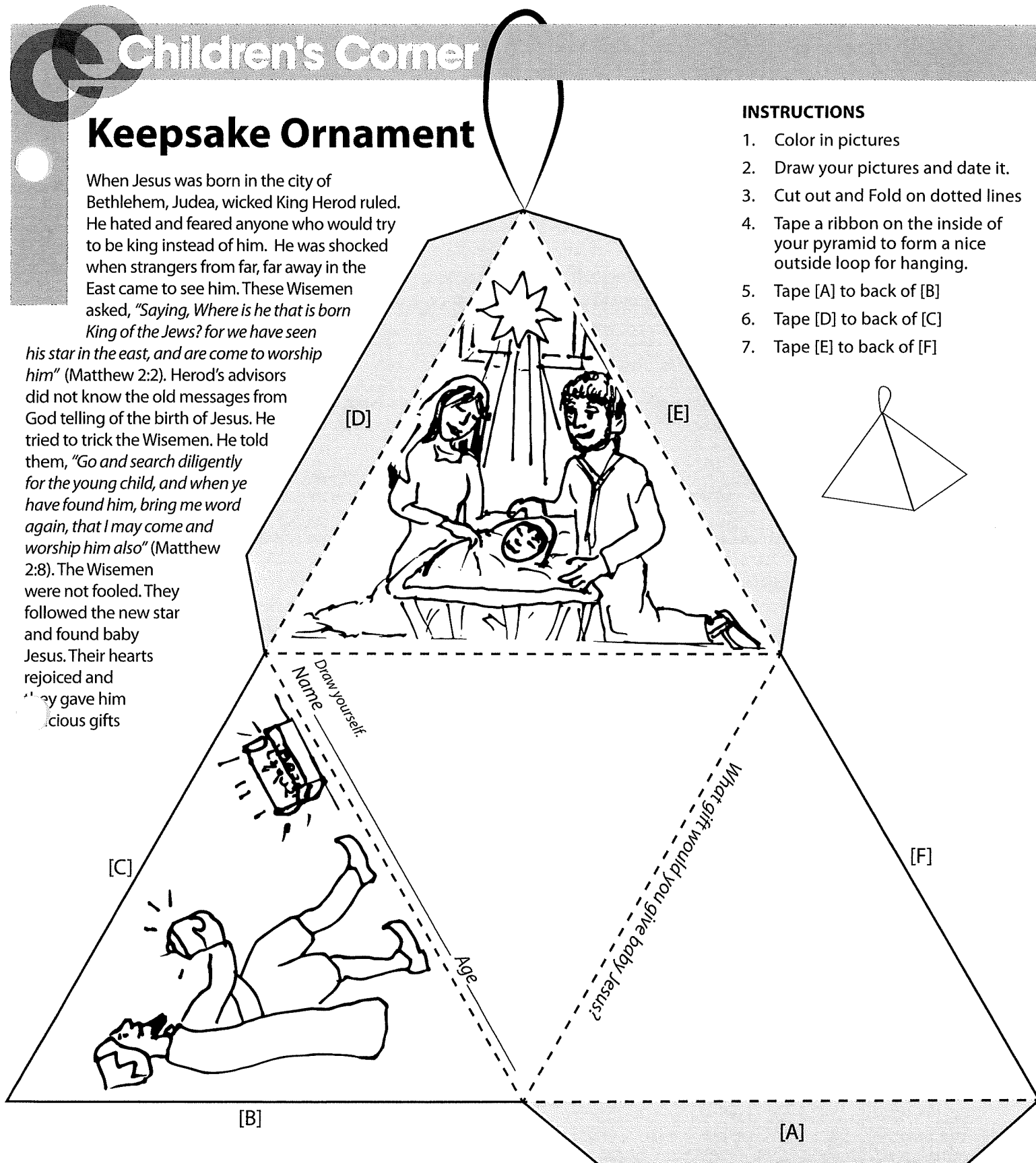
Keepsake Ornament

When Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, Judea, wicked King Herod ruled. He hated and feared anyone who would try to be king instead of him. He was shocked when strangers from far, far away in the East came to see him. These Wisemen asked, "Saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen*

his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2). Herod's advisors did not know the old messages from God telling of the birth of Jesus. He tried to trick the Wisemen. He told them, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also" (Matthew 2:8). The Wisemen were not fooled. They followed the new star and found baby Jesus. Their hearts rejoiced and they gave him precious gifts

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Color in pictures
2. Draw your pictures and date it.
3. Cut out and Fold on dotted lines
4. Tape a ribbon on the inside of your pyramid to form a nice outside loop for hanging.
5. Tape [A] to back of [B]
6. Tape [D] to back of [C]
7. Tape [E] to back of [F]



of gold, frankincense (a sap burned for incense) and Myrrh (a sap used for perfume, medicine, and is quite expensive). The Wisemen did not trust Herod so they went home another way. One night, Joseph, Baby Jesus' dad, saw an angel in his dreams. The angel warned them, "Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt... for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him... and was there (in Egypt) until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2:13-15).

Joseph woke right up, packed Mary and Jesus and their treasures from the Wisemen, and left for Egypt. God had sent the Wisemen to them so now they had money for food, travel and living! What gift would you give our Baby Jesus?

Love, Your friend
Sister Jan

Commit to Christmas

Continued from Page 7

Jesus came to give hope of salvation. Hope is something that is to be a rare commodity these days. The feeling of hopelessness can lead to depression, bad decision-making, and desperation. There are people around you suffering. Let them know that God loves them and that there is hope for a better life on earth and most of all, for their eternal salvation. Do not be afraid to share this message. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Peter 1:3).

Jesus came to direct us. He clearly laid out the plan and path our lives should take. Commit to following that plan every hour of every day. Don't let life get in your way. It is easy to lose your way and direction when you get busy. Spend time each day re-focusing through prayer (See Matthew Chapter 5, The Beatitudes).

Jesus came to share joy. Commit to having more joy each day. Commit to being satisfied with what you have and allowing your-

self to feel joy abundantly. Each of us, regardless of our situations, can allow ourselves to feel the joy and peace that our Savior has to offer. We need only extend our hand to accept it. As you go about your month, even during the busy times, do everything with joy in your heart. *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"* (John 15:11).

Don't let this Christmas Season pass like many of the rest, as a whirlwind of expected activity with only a small portion of true focus. Each time you set out to do something, ask yourself, does this fit in with the goal and purpose of Christmas? The calendar on Page 2 offers some great suggestions and ideas of how to make the most of the month. Try to limit the time you spend on unnecessary holiday activities. These things may make you feel good as well, but the blessings you will receive from focusing your time on the true message of Christmas will replace any disappointment you will feel from limiting the other activities. When you Commit to Christmas, you are Committing to Christ. What more could we do to celebrate His birth?!

The results are in! *O Holy Night* was chosen as the favorite Christmas song through the Question of the Month survey. Below are the words to this beautiful song with a powerful message of hope, salvation, and praise.

O Holy Night

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.
Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land.

The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger;
In all our trials born to be our friend.
He knows our need, our weakness is no stranger,
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King, Before Him lowly bend!
Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.



In him was life; and the life was the light of men... John 1:4

Blessing Bits

FO God's Touch

It was February 1982, and I was making deliveries as I did every day at work. In a hurry, I jumped into the van and drove off without using my seat belt. It had just rained and the van started to slide around a curve. I felt out of control but I did not want to hurt anyone else, so I quickly turned the wheel and the van started to flip over. With the force of the van rolling over I should have been thrown through the windshield but I felt hands on my shoulders keeping me in my seat. The Sherriff informed me later based on the accident that I should have been thrown from the van and crushed, but I know God sent an angel to be my seatbelt. In the hospital with my 6th vertebra broken, the doctor said I would be paralyzed but God had different plans. Every day that I walk I praise God for His mercy in sparing my life.—Brother Chuck Maddox, Sr. – Lake Worth, Florida Branch

BB God Sent Me Peace

At a recent feet washing service, I was able to have my feet washed but unable to wash anyone's feet because I am still recovering from my liver transplant. I went home after the service feeling very down because I missed out on a big part of the blessing of this ordinance. After lying down, I fell asleep and dreamed that I was kneeling down and washing a brother's feet. I felt such a blessing

when I woke up. I have very few dreams that I remember, and I know that God gave me this dream to provide the experience that I had missed out on and to comfort me. I thank God for being with me over the last eight years of illness, for providing me with a new liver, and even for caring about my disappointments and providing me with peace.—Brother Emil Lambert - Detroit, Michigan Branch 2

BB We Serve a Great Friend!

After teaching my morning history class at the University of Detroit Mercy, I was praying about my job situation. I thanked God for putting me back in the classroom, for I am always blessed while teaching. I also asked Him to show me a way to progress in my career. I was worried about my family's finances. Then the Lord spoke to me and said, *"Don't give your job another thought. I am going to hand it to you."* Surprised, I meditated on this message as I drove home. Later, I was eating lunch with my wife when my phone rang. It was Wayne County Community College. They said that they saw my file in their records and that they wanted me to teach a history course. They hired me right on the phone without giving me an interview! Then, about an hour later, they called me back and said that unfortunately, unbeknownst to them, the president of the

campus had cancelled the course just a few hours earlier. However, they said not to worry because they would need me for another course. Confused, I said to the Lord, *"Lord, you fulfilled your Word right away, but then the class was cancelled. Are you testing my faith?"* Then I felt the Holy Spirit encompass me. I knew that this was a confirmation to my question. Sure enough, two days later, WCCC called me again and gave me a history course to teach. God fulfilled His Word. He literally handed me another class. This is the Great Friend that we serve!—Brother Daniel Stone – Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnewsinfo@gmail.com

Question for this month: *When worries about the future come, what scripture or song brings you peace?*

Answer from last month: *What is your favorite Christmas song?* "O Holy Night" was chosen as the favorite Christmas song. See page 11 for the words to this beautiful song and powerful message.



In him was life; and the life was the light of men... John 1:4