



ELK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2017

Merry Christmas Everyone!

From the Pastor's Study...

*“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence...
to make your name known to your adversaries, so that
the nations might tremble at your presence!”
Isaiah 64:1, 2*

When we first meet Jesus in Mark's gospel—our gospel emphasis for 2017-18 beginning with Advent this December—Jesus is not a baby lying in a inn/house in Bethlehem, he's not on the run from Herod fleeing to Egypt, and he's not goofing off in Joseph's carpentry shop. He is instead a fully-grown man, going to meet the wild man John the Baptist along the Jordan River to be baptized at his hand.

Mark skips over any stories about Jesus' early years. No shepherds, no donkeys, no wise men visiting with expensive gifts. It changes nothing about how special Mark's Jesus is to us. That just means that those stories were not vital to Mark's purpose: to show a Jesus on the move, with a mission.

All this means that people probably didn't recognize him as anything special; there was likely little if anything known about him at that point. And hanging out with John, with his camel hair coat and gamey diet, would have alarmed more than informed them about him.

Yet these words at the top of the page come from the prophet Isaiah, and were written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth. They capture the universal desire that God send his messiah to relieve them of the miseries of that time, chiefly being victims of stronger nations (who were supposed to quake at the messiah's presence), and destroy their enemies. The enemy du jour of that time was Babylon; but Assyria before then, the Greeks, and finally Rome would all qualify. Herod and Pilate would be that devil's emissaries.

This week's *Christian Century* magazine arrived yesterday and includes an article by the pastor of the First Mennonite Church in Charlottesville. They had a family that would not celebrate Christmas as others did—no tree, holly, gifts, big meal, blockbuster movie outing, anything. Unknown to them, their church decided to indulge them and the church did the following Advent as this family did at home. They were incredibly gratified, and the church decided to adapt many of the changes on a permanent basis. The purpose was to recognize that Jesus did not come for, or was not represented by, much of what usually passes for Christmas.

We don't have to go "full Amish" on Christmas; we still decorate, that's not off the calendar! But we should remember that we do little to honor him by forgetting the fact that what brought him in part was the cries of people everywhere praying their nations would tremble in his presence.

Pastor Mickey

DATES TO REMEMBER

December

03rd	Advent begins
07th	Tree trimming and caroling -Louisa Health Care Center - 9:30 a.m.
10th	All church potluck - 9:30 a.m.
17th	Gifts for Christmas families due
20th	Delivery of Christmas gifts, 9:30 a.m.
24th	8:30 a.m. Service - TO BE HELD IN SANCTUARY 11:00 a.m. Service - TO BE HELD IN SANCTUARY

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

December

Faccone, Mary	4
Wilson, Tony & Sandra	4
Pittman, Karilyn	6
Rose, Jim	9
DiFranco, Michael	10
Weaver, Butch	11
Keene, Bobby	13
Mason, Phillip	18
Brown, Catherine	19
Brown, Phillip	19
Brown, Kim	21
Grecco, Grace	22
Snow, Larry	27



Anna, Chip, Lori and Jane working on wreath for our Fellowship Hall



Wayne and Chip working?????



Debby and Sandra working on flower arrangement

Special thanks to everyone who helped decorate the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Also to Lee for cutting and picking all the greenery and to Coral who decorated the special wreath for our sanctuary.



8:30 Service - First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 9:6

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 Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

May the love and peace of God the Father be with you all this Christmas season and throughout the coming year.

Together in Christ,

Alana Frazier