



From the Pastor's Desk

¹ The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

Mark 1:1-3 (NRSV)

The Good News is . . . The Good News is Jesus Christ. The Good News is Emmanuel, God with us. The Good News is our Creator come to earth as a fragile human being to walk with us and among us on this journey we call life. As we prepare for and participate in all of the festivities and pageantry of Christmas this season, let us remember what it is that we celebrate. The God who covenanted with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses willingly came to live among us to live out the Good News with us and for us.

Christianity today has sometimes taken on extra burdens that I wonder if we could release this year. Too often, we have become the gatekeepers and managers of Jesus, rather than his cheerleaders and proclaimers. We sometimes stand in between those seeking healing and the one who can heal rather than simply pointing people towards Jesus.

Imagine instead of an ambulance with lights on and sirens blaring racing to the emergency room, one finds a police roadblock demanding persons wishing to pass to provide proof of insurance, registration, and a driver's license. There are people bereft of hope all around us who desperately need to be loved and cared for. They seek healing physically, mentally, and emotionally, and yet we stand in their way or even actively prevent them from encountering Christ by our attitudes and hardened hearts.

We, as Christ followers, sometimes desire to sit as intermediaries, as Jesus-bodyguards, who only permit certain backstage passes to encounter Christ. Our need for power and control dictates our willingness to point people to Jesus. It's almost as if I am scared of someone receiving healing directly from Jesus, because I do not know how to relate to them once they have been fully healed. I'm afraid I will lose my role to play as the Jesus dispenser. Too often, I imagine myself as central to God's salvation plan.

The Good News is that the “Good News” is not dependent on us. It is not constrained by the powers of this world. Herod could not stop its arrival. Those on the margins were the first to hear about it. John the Baptist, living in the wilderness proclaimed the Good News to anyone and everyone who had ears to hear. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (v.3)! Even Jesus' condemnation and death were unable to stop the Good News. Jesus rose from the dead and continues to be present in our lives.

What would it look like for us at East Union to “prepare the way of the Lord” this year? How can we help to make “his paths straight?”

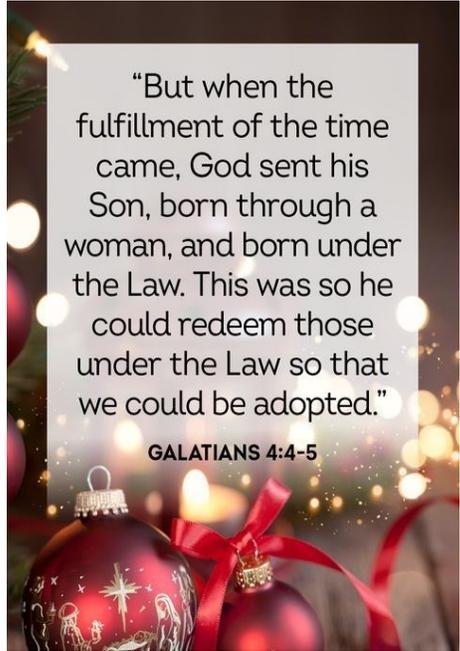
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Grateful for our Goodly Heritage

Continued from page 1

One possible answer could be to simply show up. Be present with each other. Invite friends, neighbors, and family to seek Jesus at church, at home, at work, at school, and everywhere else we might find ourselves these days. By being ready and willing to receive others where they are at and encouraging them in their personal walk with Christ, we can add to the joy that is the Good News of the season. We can remind one another that Jesus' call is to follow him, and that comes before we are ready or able. The call to follow is despite our weaknesses and even because of our weaknesses. We choose to follow Christ to become more like him and to display his goodness in our lives. This is only accomplished by obediently following, not through cleaning ourselves up and making ourselves presentable beforehand. When we fully accept this in heart of hearts, we will be ready, willing, and more able than we thought possible to help others have the same type of Christ encounter. Then we truly will be his disciples, and we can look forward to the master saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). May it be so.

Peace and blessings,
pastor Joel Beachy



"But when the fulfillment of the time came, God sent his Son, born through a woman, and born under the Law. This was so he could redeem those under the Law so that we could be adopted."

GALATIANS 4:4-5



70 years ago: 1951

December 30 - Misses Elvira & Margareta Oskolkow and Nellie & Mathilda Bachman will sing a number of German Christmas Carols after classes today.

60 years ago: 1961

December 10 - Edward Miller has gone to Denver, Colorado to begin his I-W assignment.

December 31 - Sharon Lichti and Larry Piper were married December 22, at The Little Country Church near Los Angeles, California. There will be a reception for them at I.M.S. on January 6, at 7:30 P.M. Everyone is invited.

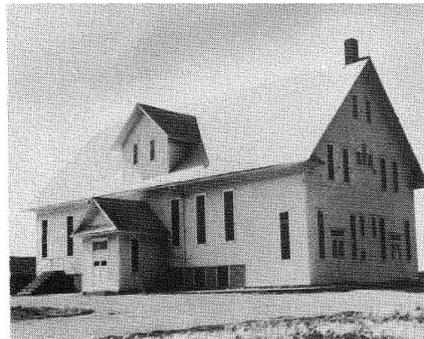
50 years ago: 1971

December 5 - Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Guengerich are the parents of a son, Jeffery Scott, born December 2.

December 19 - Congratulations and best wishes to Gaylord and Shirley Yoder. They were married at the Kalona Mennonite Church last evening.

40 years ago: 1981

December 13 - Nyle Kauffmans are hosting a combination Graduation-Farewell party for Esther Ogonna whom many of you helped support last year. It will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, December 20. Everyone is welcome.



30 years ago: 1991

December 1 - Congratulations to Tina Boller and Steve Dachtler who were married here yesterday.

December 1 - There will be an open house for Noah Brenneman's 90th birthday at Mike Brenneman's house from 2-4 p.m. today.

December 15 - The vote on December 8, 1991, concerning Noah Helmuth was approved by voice of the congregation. The results were 183 "yes" and 11 "no" or 94% approval. Noah Helmuth has accepted East Union's call as Associate Pastor. He will begin his responsibilities in late March or early April.

20 years ago: 2001

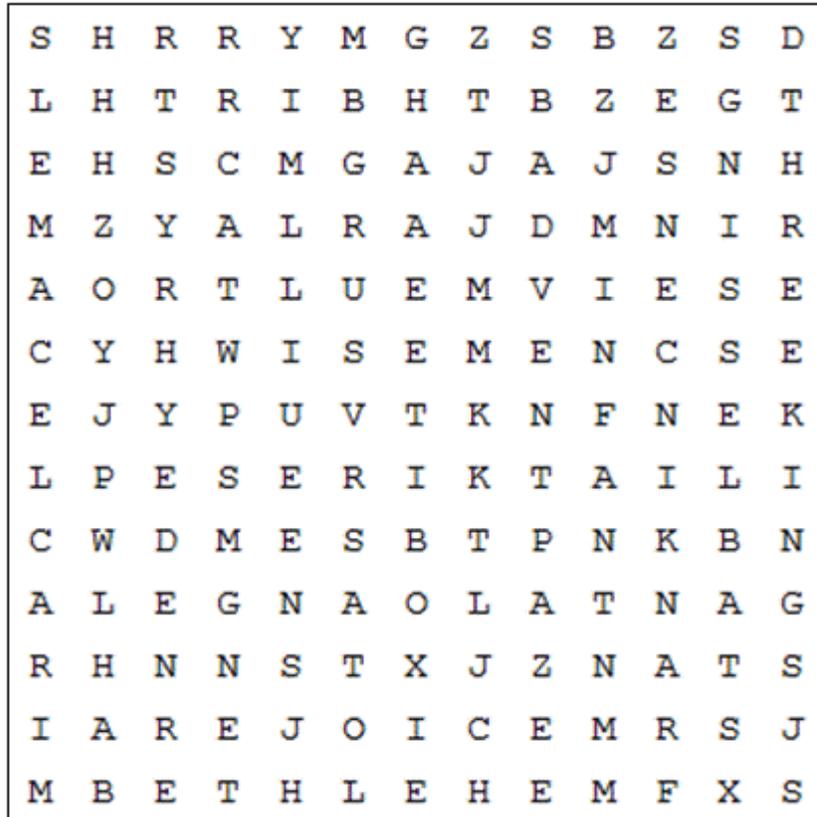
December 23 - Poinsettia's were given in memory of: Dale Logan, Lowell Erb, Shirley Geyer, C.J. & Dinah Miller, Dale & Lois Yoder, James A. Yoder, Aaron S. & Mary Ann Hochstetler, Robbie Harvey, Robert & Ruby Schrock, Joe P. and Lula Gingerich, Elmer & Alma Schrock, Duane Schrock, Bill Logan, Hilda Fisher.

10 years ago: 2011

December 11 - Jubilance Children's Choir, a community choir led by Rhonda Miller, will be giving their Christmas concert today at 4 pm at Kalona Mennonite Church.



Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

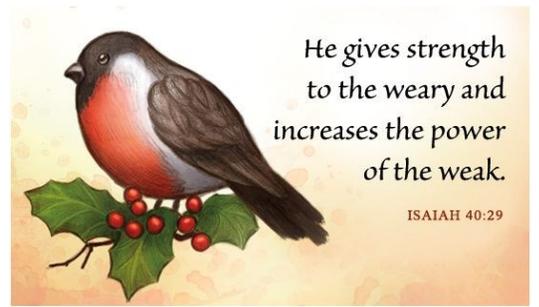
INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN





DECEMBER 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Chad Miller	2	3 Elvesta Hochstedler	4 Isaac Beachy
5 <i>Morning Worship</i> Melanie Schweitzer Rebecca Rhodes	6	7	8 Carroll Copeland	9	10	11 Kathy Schlabach
12 <i>Morning Worship</i> Ed Yoder Jack Miller Conner Moberly	13	14 John beachy	15 Collin Miller	16 Tom Meyers	17 James Yoder Megan Gingerich	18 Dale & Charlene Rhodes '65 Gaylord & Shirley Yoder '71
19 <i>Morning Worship</i> Christmas Play Randy Rempel	20 Cleo Knepp	21 Ethan Yoder Church Council Meeting 7 pm	22	23	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Service	25 
26 <i>Morning Worship</i> Will Miller	27 Claire Miller Tamera Erb	28	29	30 Greta Rempel Tammy Yoder James & Ruth Boller '67	31 Tom Miller Tim & Kate Yoder '04	